CONVOCATION ADDRESSES

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CONVOCATION ADDRESSES

The 2nd March, 1935

Syamaprasad Mookerjee, Esq., M.A., B.L.,
Barrister-at-Law, M.L.C.,
Vice-Chancellor

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In accordance with well-established custom it is now my privilege to address the Convocation and to extend to you all a most cordial welcome on behalf of the University. Your presence here to-day is an indication of the position which this University occupies in the affections of the people of this land. To Your Excellency I desire to convey on behalf of my colleagues and myself our grateful thanks for your unflagging interest in the realisation of our ideals. We trust that during the period of your Chancellorship we shall take not one or two but several steps forward in our march towards further advancement.

During the last twelve months the University lost the services of some of its distinguished members. Dr. Pramathanath Nandi, Sir Bepinbehari Ghose, Dr. Mrigendralal Mitra, and Mr. Jyotiprasad Sarvadhikary had risen to conspicuous positions in their own spheres of activity by dint of their abilities and attainments. The professions they adopted were naturally different, but the University presented to them a common platform for service which they ungrudgingly gave for a large number of years. We also pay our tribute to the memory of three other eminent persons, Sir John Kerr, Sir Sankaran Nair and Sir Dinshaw Mulla, who, though not intimately connected with this University had, at one period or other, influenced its activities, and generously championed the cause of its progress.

It is my pleasant duty to refer to the services rendered to the University by my predecessor, Sir Hassan Suhrawardy. He came to occupy office at a time when the University was passing through a period of great anxiety, due mainly to its uncertain financial position ; and it must have been a source of gratification to him that during his time several measures of far-reaching importance were considered and settled by the Senate. The University has conferred on Sir Hassan the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science in recognition of the work he did for it.

The University of Calcutta which is perhaps the largest University in Asia, if not in the world, presents problems of great magnitude and complexity and it is impossible to survey its detailed activities in the course of a Convocation address. The work of the University may be broadly classified into five divisions. First, we have directly to administer three large departments of Post-Graduate Teaching in Arts, Science and Law, comprising nearly 3,000 students. For this purpose we maintain a staff of 265 whole-time and part-time teachers in 40 different subjects. It is our endeavour to place at their disposal adequate facilities not only for imparting instruction but also for carrying on original investigations in various subjects of study. We have also engaged the services of about 40 research scholars who are afforded ample opportunities for carrying on their work.

Secondly, we have to supervise collegiate education in Bengal and Assam which now contain 60 colleges. The total number of students reading in these institutions is more than 30,000. 33 colleges are scattered in different places outside Calcutta and 27 function within this city.

Thirdly, we have to superintend the working of 1,291 recognised high schools. Of these 112 are situated in Calcutta and 1,079 outside it and the total number of students reading in them is about 3,00,000.

Fourthly, we have to conduct examinations throughout the year in Arts, Science, Law, Medicine, Teaching, Commerce and Engineering. The magnitude of the work which the University has to do in this connection can well be appreciated when we remember that the total number of students appearing at the various examinations in 1934 was about 41,650. This involved the appointment of more than 2,000 examiners and paper-setters and the setting and printing of 810 different question papers, the examinations being held in 200 centres and lasting for 146 days out of 260 working days in the year.

Fifthly, we have to devote a large part of our time and attention to the work of promoting the health and welfare of our students. For this purpose we maintain departments and agencies whose great task is to conduct activities directly and also to devise means for correlating the work of individual institutions.

What I have briefly described may be characterised as the routine activities of the University; yet they are of a diverse nature and often present problems which require our closest attention and are not always easy of solution. In addition to these we are continually engaged in considering new measures of reform vitally affecting the future welfare of this province. Such efforts should by no means be regarded as accidental or isolated instances of University activities; they form com-

ponent parts of a well-considered plan of future re-organisation, each developing in its appropriate place.

One such problem relates to the new Matriculation Regulations. For the last 14 years this University has striven hard to remodel the Matriculation Examination which may well be described as the basic factor of our educational system. I have no desire to recall here the controversies which the proposals had given rise to. We have now received from Government a definite pronouncement that the new Regulations will be sanctioned. The representatives of Government and the University have arrived at an agreement as to the form they will take. The Regulations embody several fundamental principles. They recognise under certain conditions the claims of the vernacular as the proper medium of instruction and examination. They recognise the imperative necessity of altering the present courses of study, of widening and including within them matters which are of paramount importance in the training of boys. They recognise the need of physical education and some form of vocational training. They recognise the desirability of providing special alternative subjects and courses of study for girls whose number is now rapidly increasing and whose future education is presenting to the University new and complex problems for solution.

Another great task which the University has undertaken is the collection of materials for the systematic preparation of text-books in Bengali in various subjects of study, specially of a scientific character. We have appointed experts who are engaged in collecting words and expressions to be used in text-books on scientific and technical subjects and in finding out the best ways of adapting them for our purposes. We are fully cognisant of the difficulties that lie ahead. We do not want to be carried away by enthusiasm to such an extent as to coin entirely new words in the vernacular and to demand their exclusive employment. We are aware that many technical words and expressions in foreign languages are used throughout the world in the same form, nor can we forget that after the Matriculation stage our students will have to carry on their studies through the medium of English. With a view to maintaining a uniform standard we have appointed a co-ordinating committee consisting of experts on whose judgment the University places full reliance. We have already made a collection of 14,800 expressions which are now being carefully examined. We hope soon to publish this list and invite comments thereon. I visualise the day when in this manner the University will be able to prepare a complete glossary of words in all subjects and for all standards. This will enrich Bengali language and literature and also make it possible for us to take steps for extending the use of

the vernacular for the higher examinations of the University.

One of the urgent needs of the hour is a larger supply of trained teachers for our schools. This question has of late assumed great importance in view of our decision to alter the Regulations for the Matriculation Examination. The two existing institutions, one in Calcutta and the other at Dacca, are wholly inadequate to meet our requirements. We are keenly alive to our responsibility for making necessary provision for this purpose. A Committee is investigating the question and we expect to place our proposals before the Senate for consideration in the near future.

Another Committee is engaged in formulating schemes for the proper utilisation of the princely benefaction of the late Viharilal Mitra for the promotion of female education in Bengal—a matter of vital importance to our future intellectual advancement.

Turning now to the Post-Graduate organisation, a Committee has been appointed which is exploring the possibilities of improving the quality of its work and of extending its activities. It is my hope that within the next few months it will be possible for us to introduce reforms in various directions affecting the work of both our teachers and students, which will help to place the organisation on a firmer foundation, thus increasing its usefulness and efficiency.

One of our greatest drawbacks has been insufficient accommodation for the University Library. This University may well congratulate itself on being the possessor of one of the finest libraries in the East. Our regret hitherto has been that we have not been able to allow our students adequate facilities for using the library in a satisfactory manner. One of the steps which the Senate has taken to remove this defect is to complete the fourth storey of the Asutosh Building where the University General Library and the Post-Graduate Lending Library will be located from the next session. The spacious hall facing south will be utilised as the reading room and is expected to accommodate about 350 persons. We have made arrangements for decorating its walls with frescoes, illustrating the development of Indian culture and civilization with special reference to the contributions made by Bengal. I trust that the surroundings and equipments of the hall will inspire both teachers and students to the noblest and most strenuous efforts for the pursuit of knowledge.

We are also engaged in considering the possibility of providing increased accommodation in the University College of Science with a view to enabling our teachers, particularly in the applied sciences, to fulfil satisfactorily the obligations of their offices and to extend the usefulness of the institution. We are no less anxious to concentrate in one place the teaching of subjects like Zoology,

Botany, Anthropology, Experimental Psychology and Physiology, now scattered in three different parts of the city. I have every hope that this matter will be taken in hand during the next session, so that by 1936 students of these subjects will have no complaint to make with regard to their work.

During the year under review, the activities of our teachers and advanced students have been such as to deserve the congratulations of all well-wishers of the University. Time will not permit me to dwell at length on the various problems which have engaged their attention. It will be sufficient for me to state that many of the results of their investigations have been published in the course of the year as independent treatises or as articles in recognised journals both in and outside India. In several instances they amount to notable contributions to the advancement of knowledge. The spirit of original investigation is not confined to the members of the Post-Graduate staff alone. We find a number of teachers in our affiliated colleges who, in spite of their limited opportunities, are making valuable contributions in their special subjects. We rejoice to find that this spirit also inspires the activities of our young scholars who, after obtaining their master's degree, are carrying on investigations of diverse problems under the guidance of University teachers. That the fountain will not run dry is abundantly manifest from the fact that during the last twelve months as

many as thirteen of our graduates obtained the doctor's degree, six in arts and seven in science. Most of their dissertations were examined by foreign experts who occupy pre-eminent positions in their own spheres of learning. Again, medals and prizes have been awarded to as many as sixteen young scholars on the results of the theses they submitted for scrutiny at the hands of impartial and competent examiners. We have also steadily adhered to the policy of sending abroad some of our brilliant men either for advanced work or for obtaining first-hand knowledge of recent developments in their fields of activity. Similarly we have invited distinguished scholars from both East and West to deliver courses of lectures on a variety of subjects in which they are regarded as authorities. These activities do not represent a sudden growth during one particular year. For the last 25 years this University has resolutely stood for expansion of education and, more than any other institution in India, has placed, at the disposal of its advanced students and scholars, facilities for carrying on original work in various branches of learning. The imperfect survey which I have placed before you only goes to show that the torch of knowledge which was lighted in this temple of learning is still burning brightly, thanks to the zealous devotion of the workers gathered within its walls.

While I lay stress on the academic activities of the University, I cannot ignore that it will be

impossible for us to improve the quality of higher teaching and research until and unless we take up and solve the question of collegiate education in Bengal. The University at present exercises indirect control in this sphere by prescribing text-books and holding examinations. In my judgment the solution does not lie in including in our list an array of important and difficult text-books or in artificially increasing or diminishing the percentage of passes at the different University examinations. We must devise means for improving the method and standard of teaching in our colleges, the conditions under which the teachers work and the students reside and carry on their corporate activities. It is unfortunate that the recommendations made by the Sadler Commission have not borne fruit in the province for the benefit of which the Commission was appointed. An attempt to ascertain at this stage how this has happened is not likely to serve any useful purpose. We have now to unite, to gather our forces together and to formulate proposals for future reform in the light of existing circumstances. It is hardly possible to discuss them here in detail. One aspect must necessarily be the ascertainment of the means for initiating special courses and for establishing special institutions which will open new avenues and new careers for our youths, as distinguished from a system that is predominantly literary in character and hardly useful for the average person in facing the struggle of life. Education of

one type is not equally good for all people and a re-orientation of the present system is immediately necessary. On three main points, however, we must be completely satisfied. First, we must be provided with sufficient funds. Secondly, the ultimate result of the reforms must be in the direction of expansion of education and not its curtailment in any shape or form. Lastly, the control must be vested in a body of men endowed with full autonomy and chosen primarily on academic considerations.

Before I conclude my remarks on University and collegiate education, I may briefly refer to the financial position of the University. During 1934, the University had a total income of about 27 lacs of rupees, out of which Rs. 18,65,000 or a little more than 69 per cent. represented the income from fees and other sources, Rs. 3,65,000 or nearly 14 per cent. was derived from interest on endowments, and Rs. 4,68,000 or about 17 per cent. received from Government. As regards the Government grant we are now in a somewhat difficult position. In accordance with the financial agreement with Government reached in 1932, we are not permitted to enjoy our full increased income from fees. The Government grant is liable to be curtailed to the extent of 50 per cent. of the excess income of the Fee Fund if it exceeds a standard figure fixed by Government. I do not intend at this stage to go into the details of this question. But on behalf of the University and, if I may add, of the educated

public of Bengal, I make an earnest appeal to Government to allow us to have the full advantage of our increased income so that we may be in a position to fulfil the great task we have undertaken. In this connection I venture to express the hope that Government and the Legislature will find it possible to restore the entire annual grant of Rs. 1,29,000 sanctioned for many years for the non-Government colleges in Bengal.

I rejoice to find that during the year under review the University has been the recipient of several donations. The total sum received since our last Convocation is Rs. 65,000 of which a sum of Rs. 50,000 has been endowed by Dr. Harendra Coomar Mookerjee. His donation which now comes up to three lacs of rupees is indeed unique in the annals of the University, coming as it does from a member of the teaching profession. A sum of Rs. 10,000 was bequeathed by the late Rai Bahadur Ramcharan Mitra for industrial education. On behalf of the University I gratefully thank the donors and specially my old teacher, Dr. Mookerjee, and venture to express the hope that these noble examples will be imitated by others who desire to see the University advance from more to more.

I have been so long discussing some of the intellectual activities of the University. I shall now turn for a few moments to the steps which the University should take for the improvement of the health and welfare of our students. As you are

aware, we have been attempting to render some service in this direction during recent years. The work of the Students' Welfare department which has won recognition from all quarters has taken two forms. It deals with the investigation of the causes affecting the health of our students by means of examination conducted by our own staff. The materials which we have collected hitherto are as interesting as they are appalling in character. What is education worth if our youths in general are physically weak or unfit, unable to stand the stress and strain of modern life? What is education worth if we cannot turn them into men physically strong and well-equipped as they should be intellectually sane and robust? We have not remained satisfied with a mere examination of their health. We are dealing as well with the preventive and the curative side of the problem. This includes not only a cheap though limited supply of medicines, spectacles and similar things but also larger provision for sports, games and scientific physical education. We have been fortunate enough to obtain, through the courtesy of the Calcutta Improvement Trust, a fine plot of land near the Dhakuria Lake. We are going to erect a well-equipped home for the University Rowing Club of which our teachers and students will no doubt take the fullest advantage. One of our pressing needs is a playground for the University. Recently we have made arrangements for sharing the Presidency College grounds in the Maidan for

two days in the week. For this co-operation our thanks are due to that college, but this is not at all sufficient for our purpose, nor can it meet the demands of about 3,000 students who are directly taught by the University. We are also taking steps for securing a better enrolment for the University Training Corps which, we hold, is capable of considerable improvement and expansion. Again, the *Bratachari* movement which has already attracted the imagination of our young men and women deserves the most careful consideration of the University.

The fine display of organisation and discipline which our students gave in connection with the celebration of the Foundation Day in January last is worthy of all praise and must have shown the most adverse critic what our young men and women are capable of achieving. What they ask for is sympathy and organised co-operation. What they need to-day is proper direction of their youthful energies into healthy channels which may be worthy of them and of the traditions of the province to which they belong. I have abundant faith in the glory of youth and what I ask from the authorities in the name of the students of Bengal is that they be given a chance to live, an opportunity to enjoy life and the amplest facilities for the development of their health and character, so that in the days to come they may be real assets in the furtherance of the highest interests of our motherland. They want nothing further;

they will be satisfied with no less than what students in other countries, more fortunate than ours, are privileged to receive from their Universities or Governments.

I feel that it will be a fortunate day for Bengal when the University can organise a central bureau whose chief aim will be to devise ways and means for the progressive welfare of the student community of Bengal. Its great and important task will be to promote not only the physical well-being of our boys and girls, to assist the needy and the deserving, but also to develop in them a sound moral character; to create men and women who in the home, in the village and in the city, in their influence on Government and local administration and on national policies, will act righteously, fearlessly and for the attainment of the general welfare. The great obstacle, it will be said, is finance. But I am emphatically of opinion that such a beneficent organisation cannot fail to receive the support of the University, of Government and of the public. Its means should be supplemented by a national fund which we might call the University Alumnus Fund to which all old students of the University may contribute their share, large or small. The starting of such a fund is a well-known thing in the history of some Universities in the West and let Calcutta be the first Indian University to inaugurate a similar fund in this country.

The imperfect survey of some of our important

activities which I have ventured to place before you has been undertaken with a full sense of the difficult times through which our University and our country are passing. While realising the advance we have made, we unhesitatingly acknowledge that we are not satisfied with all that is being done in the sphere of education. We can derive but little consolation from the knowledge that defects in the educational system are not peculiar to this province or country, that they are taxing the ingenuity and intellect of veteran educationists in countries more prosperous and more fortunate than ours. We are struggling hard to grapple with a situation which is the result of a system of education handed down to us from previous generations. The various projects of reform outlined by me are only a few of the many which must be undertaken if we are to refashion the old system and make it respond to the call of the nation and the demands of the present day. We do not share the views of those who maintain that further expansion of education is undesirable. We, on the other hand, strongly feel that the door of the University should be thrown open wider still, so that it might elevate the nation and rouse the self-respect of the people of this land. The influence of the University in this democratic age cannot safely be limited to the period of youth but must include systematic and organised effort for the education of adults. In the present state of our national existence I cannot but emphasise the real-

ity and the greatness of this need. In other countries there have been inaugurated in recent times movements for giving to the adults of every class the advantages of University education as far as practicable. As the result of this there has been discovered an astonishing measure both of the ability and of the desire to make use of these opportunities. This is a field of activity still untrodden by us. If we are to keep ourselves in close touch with the life of the people, if we are not to forego an opportunity of service too great to be neglected, we have to explore the possibility of including this in our programme of work.

For various reasons our province to-day, more than any other in India, is an object of attention and attack from quarters far and near. This is not the occasion to discuss the reasons which have contributed to this state of affairs. But if we are to live and grow as a University, one of whose paramount tasks is to produce not only leaders of thought and action but also workers dedicated to the service of the nation, we cannot sit idle with philosophic unconcern and let things drift as they may. So far as we are concerned, it is for us to set our house in order. It is for us, and specially the younger generation—Hindus, Moslems and Christians alike—to combine and resolutely stand for the permanent well-being of our province and to rescue her from the deadly stagnation which now seems to envelop her. Unmoved by considerations of the

hour, it is for us to substitute the welfare of all classes for that of our own class only. It is for us to realise the supreme need of abandoning paths of hatred, violence and destruction. It is for us to concentrate on constructive plans of reform and expansion in different fields of activity for the promotion of national prosperity. It is for us to work honestly and steadfastly for increasing our efficiency—to learn the great value of discipline and moderation which are always compatible with true patriotism—to regard ourselves, each one of us, no matter what our position in life may be, as trustees of our national honour. I realise fully that this is a task not easy of achievement. But inspired by a lofty idealism, we shall be stirred to action if we remember this simple but cardinal truth that the future of Bengal—nay, of India—lies to-day with the younger generation of her men and women and that she will be only what they shall make her to be.

Standing in the very place which is sanctified by the memory of one of whom I cannot think without the deepest feelings of affection and reverence, to whom I owe my life and all, and to whom this University owes its greatness and eminence—standing on this sacred spot, to me there is nothing nobler, nothing greater than to be afforded an opportunity of serving the truest interests of my *Alma Mater* and my country. With you I pray, and pray fervently, that the University may for ever be

pledged to discover and disseminate truth in every realm, to train men in openness of mind and love of truth and freedom, to inculcate right ideals, to develop personalities capable of the largest participation in the good of life and the largest service to our beloved motherland.

The 2nd March, 1935

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir John Anderson, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.I.E., *Chancellor*

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It was a great disappointment to me that I was prevented from presiding over Convocation last year by the sudden death of my colleague, the late Sir Provash Mitter.

Each year death removes many who have contributed to the work of the University and this year, as the Vice-Chancellor's address shows, the loss has been particularly heavy.

The past year which we now have under review has seen a change of Vice-Chancellors and I should like to take this opportunity of thanking Sir Hassan Suhrawardy for all the assistance which he gave me during the two years in which we were associated in our respective offices and I heartily endorse the references which the new Vice-Chancellor has made to his predecessor's services to the University.

And now I desire to offer to you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, my most sincere congratulations on your appointment to the office which your illustrious

father occupied with such ability and devotion and in which he did so much not only to further the cause of higher education both in and outside this province, but also to promote the interests and well-being of the country generally. You have yourself given some indication of your feelings to-day and I can well understand that a cherished ambition was realised when you succeeded to this chair. I have no doubt that you will be continually fortified in the discharge of your responsible duties by the example and ideals of your father.

That these duties are no sinecure, is clear from the admirable conspectus which you have given us of the wide range of activities for which the University is responsible. The vastness and complexity of the problems with which the University is faced and the amount of thought and organization required merely to carry on the ordinary administration can, perhaps, be fully appreciated only by those who are intimately acquainted with its inside working, but the figures and facts which you have quoted will give to others some inkling of what is involved.

I was particularly glad therefore to hear the tribute paid to the co-operation and support of all those engaged in the work of the University; for without such co-operation and support a University could not hope to have that vitality and spirit which are essential if it is to carry out its proper functions of leadership in learning, character and service.

It is gratifying to learn that the University are satisfied with the contributions of the teachers and students to the advancement of knowledge and that they look forward with confidence to the maintenance of the same high standard of achievement in future years.

It is a matter of gratification to Government as well as to the University that the long discussions and negotiations over the revision of the Matriculation Regulations are now drawing to a close. I understand that the Senate approved of the Regulations last Saturday and that they will now be submitted to Government for final sanction.

The central feature of the changes is, of course, the substitution of the vernacular for English as the medium of instruction. This is a momentous change and there are some probably who regard it with misgiving: they apprehend for instance that it will automatically result in a marked falling-off in the knowledge of English. It has, however, been kept well in mind that the adoption of the vernacular as the medium of instruction with the object of ensuring the more efficient teaching and the more intelligent grasp of the various subjects in the curriculum will be of full benefit only if it is accompanied by arrangements which will ensure a radical improvement in the teaching of English: both the University and Government believe that the Regulations adopted to ensure such a standard will prove adequate and that the result of the inno-

vation will be to raise the level of education generally. I have no doubt that the desired results will be achieved by means of the Regulations provided they are administered with sympathy and understanding and that their working is carefully watched.

The changes in the Matriculation Regulations will bring with them other problems to be solved; one of these—the preparation of good text-books in the vernacular, especially on scientific subjects—the Vice-Chancellor has already anticipated. They will accentuate also the need for a larger number of properly trained teachers—a need which is already greatly felt in Bengal and here again I observe that a Committee has been appointed to make recommendations.

I should like to associate myself with the Vice-Chancellor in his acknowledgment of the donations which have been received during the year and particularly of the further gift made by Dr. H. C. Mookerjee. Two years ago I was able to express my appreciation of his munificence and in each of the two years since then he has added to his benefactions.

By my absence last year I was also prevented from acknowledging the very handsome bequest made by the late Rai Viharilal Mitra Bahadur; this benefaction, which gives the University Rs. 4,000 a month for the advancement of female education among Hindus in Bengal, comes most opportunely at a time when the wide extension of female educa-

tion has become a problem of vital importance to the province and to future generations. The Committee which is considering the proper utilisation of this money has indeed undertaken a task of first-rate importance.

I listened with interest to the suggestions which the Vice-Chancellor threw out for remoulding the educational system.

The need for some kind of reconstruction is a question that has long been exercising the minds of those who have studied the educational problems of the country. There has been a feeling for many years—a feeling shared by those responsible for administering the system—that all is not well; the feeling of dissatisfaction may often have been vague, but it has found concrete expression in demands for vocational education, for scientific and technical studies and for more practical work in schools. These were perhaps mere symptoms of a general realisation that the structure was badly designed for its purpose and that some new plan was required in its place. The difficulty has been to select that new plan; what is required, I suppose, is some practical means of ensuring that everyone shall be able to obtain that form of education from which he will be able to derive the utmost benefit and which will best qualify him to make the greatest contribution to the good of the society of which he is a member.

This is a problem in which, of course, Government and the University are both vitally interested

and to which both have given their attention ; it was discussed at the Conference held in Government House at the end of 1933 and the Hon'ble Minister for Education has recently given it his most anxious attention and hopes to formulate within a short time his general views on the structure of the educational system in Bengal.

Meanwhile, the consideration of the problem has advanced a further stage with the resolutions passed by the Conference of Indian Universities a year ago in Delhi. These resolutions are of far-reaching importance, and, passed as they were unanimously by so authoritative a body, they must commend themselves to the serious consideration of all who are interested in the educational policy of the country. As most of you are aware, they insist on a radical readjustment of the present system in schools in such a way that a large number of pupils shall be diverted at the completion of their secondary education either to occupations or to separate vocational institutions. The Government of Bengal have been invited to express their views on the resolutions and they will welcome any assistance that the University can give them in coming to a considered opinion on so important a subject. There is in these resolutions, I am sure, no wish to belittle the importance of a University course of studies and no desire to discourage boys who are suited to such a course from pursuing it : on the contrary the proposal aims at enhancing the value and importance

of such studies by eliminating those who through want of aptitude would merely serve to depress the standard to the detriment of those who can profit from such a form of education.

In any reform which might be undertaken on the lines suggested, the utmost care would have to be exercised to see that, where bifurcation takes place, it is effected with skill and sympathy, so that it may in fact help the boy to select the training and life most suited to his temperament and capacity : and it would be necessary to make available to those who are thus diverted from literary scholarship satisfactory avenues of training in other directions which will lead to a realisation of the highest functions of which they are capable.

A Universty exists not only for the advancement of learning but for the development of all those qualities such as leadership, discipline, co-operation and tolerance, pride in common membership of a great society, which make for good citizenship and which are so essential to membership of any organized community. The impressive ceremonial on the Maidan on Foundation Day last January showed that such of these qualities as could be exhibited there are being developed in this University.

With the development of Self-Government, India and Bengal will need more than ever before all those qualities that I have just mentioned and they will look, for their future leaders, to those who

are now passing through the Universities. The future of Bengal lies largely in the hands of the younger generations and they can play an important part in shaping her destinies.

This University offers many opportunities of developing those qualities which constitute leadership and I would urge all its members to take full advantage of the privileges given to them. Let them not be content with mere academic success, for then they will not have enjoyed the full benefits of membership of such a society as this. The University provides facilities for physical well-being, for sports and recreations, for mutual discussion and contact, for widening the outlook, for creating and developing good taste and a discriminating judgment.

The efforts which have been made to increase the facilities for games, the encouragement of everything conducive to friendly co-operation and mutual help, the extension and decoration of the library—all show the importance which the University attaches to those aspects of the Education which it offers. I trust that every student will realise the importance of availing himself to the full of every opportunity afforded him for the acquisition not merely of scholarship, culture and trained physique but also of those other attributes of good citizenship which honest and high-minded participation in the corporate life of a University can do so much to develop.

In conclusion, I offer my congratulations to those who have to-day been admitted to the various degrees conferred by this University or have received other academic distinctions.

To many of them this ceremony marks not only the conclusion of a long period of preparation for the serious business of life but also the severance of many personal ties. To all those I offer my earnest good wishes for their happiness in the new life upon which they are entering and success in the various tasks they may be called upon to discharge.

The 22nd February. 1936

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir John Anderson, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.I.E.

Chancellor

" MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

On previous occasions I have addressed the Convocation at some length. This year I do not propose to do so. For one thing, I have recently had an opportunity of speaking to the students on Foundation Day and I have also, in inaugurating Education Week, expressed my views on certain aspects of our educational problem. I prefer not to repeat myself and in leaving the field on this occasion to the Vice-Chancellor I believe I am following the precedent set by some of my predecessors. Before calling upon the Vice-Chancellor to deliver his Convocation speech, I should only like to express to the students who are the recipients of awards of various kinds and to those who are to-day rounding off their University career my congratulations and my very cordial good wishes."

The 22nd February, 1936

Syamaprasad Mookerjee, Esq., M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-Law, M.L.C.

Vice-Chancellor

YOUR EXCELLENCY, FELLOW-GRADUATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In accordance with time-honoured usage, it is now my privilege to address the Convocation, and to accord to you all a sincere welcome on behalf of the University. I specially offer my congratulations and best wishes to the graduates who are assembled here and who have just been admitted to their respective degrees.

During the year under review we had to mourn the death of several distinguished members and scholars, all devoted to the welfare of the University. Before I pay my tribute of respect to their memory, let me first record at this Convocation our profound sense of sorrow at the sudden demise of His Majesty King George V. At a special meeting of the Senate, the University has already expressed its deep sympathy with the Royal Family and has conveyed to His Majesty King Edward VIII its loyalty and devotion on his accession to the throne.

Among members of the Senate and teachers, we mourn the loss of two great Islamic scholars, two life-long friends and colleagues, both imbued with courage and imagination, Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy and Khan Bahadur Aga Mahomed Kazim Shirazi; of a former Vice-Chancellor, the first non-official to hold this office, a man of wide interests and an upholder of the best traditions of the University, Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary; of an eminent medical practitioner and a friend of the poor, Dr. Jatindra Nath Maitra; and of a pioneer of the movement for the physical regeneration of our youths, Captain Jitendra Nath Banerjea. The departments of Mathematics and Sanskrit have been left distinctly the poorer by the death of two of our erudite teachers, Professor Ganesh Prasad and Professor Prabhat Chandra Chakravarti, the latter being cut off in the prime of his life and in the midst of valuable work. In Rai Bahadur Narendra Nath Sen we have lost one of our devoted officers who, by dint of merit, rose from a subordinate position to an office of great trust and responsibility. We lament also the death of two distinguished European scholars, Dr. Sylvain Lévi and Sir John Woodroffe, both of whom were ardent well-wishers of the province and genuinely devoted to Indian culture and civilization, which by their life-long researches they raised in the estimation of the world.

It is customary for the Vice-Chancellor to re-

view on this occasion the work of the University during the preceding year. So varied and numerous, however, have been the questions which have engaged our attention that I can only mention some of our important activities.

Last year I referred to the momentous changes made in connection with the Matriculation Examination, giving the vernacular language its rightful place in our scheme of studies. The Regulations have since been approved by Government and I take this opportunity of thanking its representatives, particularly my friend the Minister of Education, without whose energetic support they would not have been sanctioned even fourteen years after they were first formulated by the University. The task of collecting materials for the systematic preparation of text-books in Bengali in various subjects of study, specially in Science, has been successfully continued during the year by a number of scholars whose unselfish labours deserve our best thanks. Our experts are also exploring the possibilities of a standardised form of spelling in Bengali. The principles on which we desire to proceed and the difficulties that await solution have been stated in the form of a questionnaire and we have invited the criticisms of scholars and writers from all parts of the province. The Syndicate will now take steps for the preparation and selection of text-books which should be available towards the end of the year.

I referred last year to the urgent need for the *supply of a larger number of trained teachers for* high schools. We have since made provision for short courses of study in the University for the training of teachers. Out of 15,000 teachers in our schools only about 2,000 are trained and we realise what we have been able to do is hardly adequate. A beginning has however been made and, through the new department of Teaching, we expect to be able to acquaint ourselves at first hand with many problems of secondary education, specially the difficulties under which the teachers perform their duties.

The new Library Hall has been completed and it now provides our teachers and students with increased facilities for work. We are remodelling the library and revising the system of cataloguing books so as to increase its usefulness and efficiency.

We have partially reorganised the Biological laboratories, but these need further development. We have transferred to Ballygunge the department of Anthropology, a subject which is now also included in the syllabus for the Intermediate examination. The work of constructing a new building for the department of Applied Chemistry and for providing increased accommodation for the department of Applied Physics is now in progress and the extended laboratories will be in full working order in less than six months. We are anxiously exploring the possibilities of expanding the activities of

the Science College so that it may not only be an active centre of higher teaching and research but also a potent influence in raising the standard of work done in the affiliated institutions and in providing new courses of studies leading to industrial careers.

In the department of Applied Physics we have made provision for the study of communication engineering. We expect this will open a new avenue of employment for our trained youths. This activity of ours has already received the sympathetic attention of possible donors and I have every hope that within the next few months we shall be favoured with a special endowment for the equipment of this department.

From Applied Physics let me turn for a moment to Chinese and Tibetan studies. The Consul-General of China has kindly offered us the honorary services of a teacher in Chinese and we have appointed a special instructor in Tibetan. A competent staff is now engaged in carrying on research in these subjects which will throw light on many a dark corner of ancient Indian civilization. The money we are spending on it may not be productive in any material sense, but it is expected to yield results of great academic and cultural importance.

The University has steadily carried on its duty of publication of the research activities of both teachers and advanced students. Some of them have

attracted notice from different parts of the world and have been acclaimed as works of solid value. These publications and other contributions in numerous journals and bulletins of learned societies throughout the world testify to the spirit of investigation which the University has awakened in its alumni, a spirit which alone can keep the University alive and make it grow as an active centre of learning.

That such activities are not confined to a particular class of teachers is evident from the fact that this year we have conferred the degree of Doctorate on as many as eight graduates of the University, working in different places. Of these, four are in Arts, two in Science, one in Law and one in Medicine. The various research prizes and scholarships continue to attract a large number of brilliant young men whose investigations cover a wide field of studies. The total number of scholarships and prizes awarded during the year to Fellows and advanced students for studies here and abroad amounted to 85 and their consolidated value was about one lac of rupees. Two special scholarships were awarded to two brilliant Bengali lady graduates for advanced studies in education and philosophy in Europe. Another was awarded to a Bengali graduate in aeronautics, who unfortunately met his death at a fatal air tragedy at Dum Dum last year. A special scholarship has been granted to another who has recently returned from Cambridge and is

now attached to one of our medical colleges, to enable him to carry on research in epidemic dropsy under Sir Nilratan Sircar. Another scholar was attached to the de Terra Yale-Cambridge expedition, engaged in an important work of exploration in North-Western India.

We have adhered to the policy of inviting distinguished professors and well-known personalities to deliver special lectures for the benefit of our students. To mention a few, we had amongst us Madam Halide Edib Adnan from Turkey, Prof. Noguchi from Japan, Professor Turner from America, and Dr. Kempers from Germany. Among others who have been similarly invited are Professor Zoltan De Takacs from Hungary, Sir Manmatha Nath Mukerji, our new Tagore Professor, Professor Satyendranath Bose of Dacca and Sir S. Radhakrishnan who will speak on Comparative Religion as Stephanos Nirmalendu Ghosh Lecturer. I take this opportunity of congratulating Professor Radhakrishnan on his recent appointment at Oxford which is a fitting tribute to his remarkable scholarship and attainments in the furtherance of which Calcutta played no small part.

A reform of far-reaching importance which the Senate has recently sanctioned relates to the teaching of Science at the Intermediate standard. The Regulations provide that every scientific subject should be taught in colleges, both from the theoretical and practical standpoints. But at the Uni-

versity examination we are not called upon to hold any test in respect of the practical portion. We have now decided to make this provision. We have done so in the full conviction that this will not only lead to an improvement of the work done at the Intermediate standard but will also reflect on the quality of teaching at the higher stages.

Another important scheme recently approved by the Senate relates to the creation of a Fine Arts Gallery and Museum mainly in connection with post-graduate studies. It is our desire that the Museum, while it must represent the genius of Indian art, should also lay special stress on the contributions made in this domain by North-Eastern India, specially Bengal. The establishment of the Museum has already evoked the sympathy and support of many an eminent lover of art, official and non-official. I earnestly believe that it will help the University in spreading amongst its students that essential knowledge of and respect for Indian culture, manifested through the realm of Indian Art, which has not only a supreme educative value but is also calculated to rouse the patriotic consciousness of our youths.

The building for the University Rowing Club, whose activities received favourable comments from Your Excellency the other day, will be completed within two months and will enable us to respond satisfactorily to the enthusiasm which the club has already evoked from the student commu-

nity of Calcutta. The University Training Corps deserves our congratulations for the popularity and efficiency it has recently attained, which fill us with hopes for its future. The playground allotted to the University by the Department of Public Instruction this year will be of immense help to us. The activities of our students in games and sports, which have made satisfactory progress during the year, demand co-ordination and further expansion and also call for intensive training. The increased attention paid to the health and physique of our students will stimulate the growth of both body and mind and will endow them with discipline and capacity for corporate work. We must develop the habit of playing the game and remember that in sport, as in life, victory or defeat is not the supreme factor; what is of paramount importance is that in every sphere we must bring into action our best and cleanest efforts, which should be unceasing and unyielding in character.

During the year the University has received donations for specified purposes amounting to Rs. 40,000. To the donors we have already conveyed our grateful thanks. Special mention must here be made of an endowment of Rs. 30,000 created by Mr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, one of our distinguished teachers and now a member of the Senate, for a systematic publication of works of translation in Bengali from well-known treatises in oriental classical languages. This series will be

associated with the honoured name of Mr. Isan Chandra Ghosh, the donor's father, whose death the University only recently mourned and whose contributions to the cause of development of Bengali literature have earned for him a permanent place in the affections of his countrymen.

This reference to endowments leads me to make a few observations on the financial position of the University. Our fee-income has increased in recent years. But unfortunately we have not yet been able to arrive at any satisfactory settlement with Government regarding the conditions of the State grant which covers only about 17 per cent. of our total expenditure. The Government grant for a particular year is decreased by half of the excess income of the University during the previous year, if it goes beyond the standard figure of Rs. 11,72,000. I must emphasise in this connection that the recurring grant of Rs. 3,60,000 was not intended to include the various projects of reform on which Government and the University were both agreed, neither did it represent our average deficit. It is lamentable that although we have an increased revenue at present, we are not allowed to utilise it fully for improvement and extension and are thus hampered in our activities. During the current year our grant has been reduced by Rs. 1,55,000, only because last year we had a large fee-income. I would state with all the emphasis at my command that if the University is to

pursue a progressive policy of reform and expansion, which is regarded as essential for the future welfare of the province both by Government and the people, the least that the State can do is to place the entire grant at our disposal without imposing restrictions and conditions.

Let me now turn to some aspects of our educational policy which has recently been the subject-matter of widespread discussion. A criticism with which we have become familiar in this country is that an alarmingly large number of students is receiving University education, and the Universities are responsible for wastage and unnecessary duplication of teaching arrangements. Let us examine the situation dispassionately and ask ourselves whether the criticism levelled against the Universities in India has any foundation at all.

Let me first take our own University. We serve the needs of Bengal and Assam, with the exception of a limited area which is controlled by Dacca. We have thus practically one University for a population of about fifty million in Bengal and nine in Assam. The number of students reading in the Universities and the colleges is about thirty-one thousand and the total expenditure on higher education is eighty-six lacs of rupees, Assam spending about four. Take the whole of British India with a population of two hundred and sixty-three million. India has only sixteen Universities and the number of their students will be about one lac

and twenty thousand. The total expenditure on higher education in India is less than four crores of rupees.

Let me now turn to other countries. The British Isles afford a good illustration for comparison from the point of view of population which is about forty-five million; but the number of Universities is as many as sixteen—what we have for the whole of India—and fifty-five thousand students receive instruction under their jurisdiction. About six crores and forty lacs of rupees are spent on higher education only in England and Wales. To universities alone within this area the State annually contributes two crores and twenty-seven lacs of rupees.

Let me take the figures for a British dominion. Canada, which has a population of ten million, has as many as twenty-three Universities and eighty-five thousand students pursue higher education. In Germany the population is sixty-six million with twenty-three Universities which have an enrolment of about eighty-eight thousand students. In Italy which has a population of forty-one million, there are twenty-six Universities and fifty thousand students receive higher education. In Japan with a population of sixty-four million there are six Universities and seventy thousand students.

Let me now give some figures for secondary education. In Bengal the number of pupils in different grades of secondary schools is about four lacs

and sixty thousand, of whom about three lacs belong to high schools recognised by the University. Assam has, in addition, an enrolment of seventy-seven thousand pupils in secondary schools. For every seventeen who receive secondary education, one proceeds to the higher stage. If we take the whole of India, there are about twenty-four lacs of students in schools, and for every twenty, one goes up to the University stage. But what about other countries? In the British Isles seven lacs of pupils read in secondary schools, and one in every twelve proceeds to higher education. In Canada one in every three joins the University. In Germany the proportion is one to nine; in Italy and in Japan it is one to ten.

The number of candidates at the Matriculation examination of our University often disturbs the peace of mind of our critics. May I bring it to their notice that if about twenty-five thousand candidates will appear at our Matriculation examination this year, four years ago fifty-seven thousand candidates sat for the Approved First Examination from secondary schools in England and Wales alone—an examination which has been adopted by the Universities as a Matriculation examination—and seventy-three per cent. of them were successful?

Similar illustrations might be given in reference to educational opportunities existing in other civilised countries which allot enormous sums of

money to education. We have not heard it stated that the number of students receiving instruction in universities, in colleges and in secondary schools in these countries is by any means excessive or that it displays an unhealthy mental development on the part of the people of these lands. Neither have we heard it stated that the large number of universities and educational institutions existing in each of these countries—which must necessarily make similar provision for teaching and research in many branches of study—are wasting national resources or are guilty of duplication of arrangements. Neither again have we heard any sweeping condemnation of their educational systems on the ground that the vast majority of the students is pursuing education, as indeed they must, not solely out of respect for learning for the sake of learning but also as a means to an end.

While I make these general observations, I do not ignore certain essential factors. I recognise that each country must have its own problems and nowhere is the educational system considered perfect. I recognise that in each one of these countries there is the amplest provision for elementary education. But surely, if in Bengal or in India primary education to-day is utterly inadequate, the fault does not rest with the University; neither does it stand to reason that the educational opportunities offered at the higher stages should be curtailed or condemned. I do not ignore that in other countries

education is of a varied type and affords facilities for the training of youths in diverse branches of knowledge, theoretical and practical. But surely, the remedy for the present state of things in this country would be to make provision for similar kinds of instruction in our schools and colleges and not to complain against the number of students reading in them. I do not ignore that in other countries, apart from the education which thousands of students receive through the medium of the universities, colleges and schools, there are other recognised institutes and bodies through which knowledge is spread for the benefit of the people, both young and old. In our country the number of such institutions is extremely limited. I do not ignore that in many other countries, although general unemployment is a disturbing element in national life, unemployment amongst educated people, though present, is not so distressing as in India. But let us not forget that national interests in those lands have secured among the different authorities—the State, the universities and other educational agencies and representatives of trade, industry and commerce—a better and more harmonious arrangement for the proper utilisation of the skilled services of trained men and women who are absorbed in diverse occupations and careers. In our country unfortunately such co-operation is not at present found in any appreciable measure.

I am moved to make these observations because

in recent times there has been a marked tendency to throw a major portion of the blame for the existing state of affairs in this country on the universities and to minimise the importance of the work which has been done by them. There has often been a lamentable want of realisation of the scope for far greater service which the universities, if better equipped and organised, are capable of rendering for the advancement of national prosperity. Whatever reconstruction in the sphere of education might be made in future—and we readily recognise the vital need of reforms—it would be nothing short of a national disaster if the prestige and the authority of the University are sought to be curtailed or its influence minimised.

In recent years there have been numerous reports, resolutions and addresses on educational reforms. The criticisms and proposals which have appeared are so varied and formidable that it is often difficult to discover the correct path of action. This province presents for solution problems of educational reconstruction of an unusual complexity. Let us strive and do all that lies in our power to strengthen our foundation, to raise our standard, to revitalise the system and make it respond to the needs of the hour in full accordance with the genius of the people of this country. The time has come when we should sink our differences and inaugurate a new policy of education which will be for the highest good of the largest number of our people.

Education offers a field of activity where it is possible for all parties to work in the fullest harmony and co-operation and all must work in that spirit if reforms are to be of any real significance. There must be no conflict of aims and ideals, no arbitrary exercise of authority, no domination of vested interests.

Our ideal is to provide extensive facilities for education from the lowest grade to the highest, to mould our system in such a way as to unify our educational purpose and to draw out the best qualities that lie hidden in our youths and to train them, intellectually, physically and morally, for devoted service in all spheres of national activity—in villages, in towns and in cities. Our ideal is to make the widest provision for a sound liberal education, to find the correct synthesis between cultural education and vocational and technical training, remembering always that no nation can achieve greatness by turning its youth into a mere machine-made product, with nothing but a material end in view. Our ideal is to afford the amplest facilities and privileges to our teachers so that they may be endowed with learning, character, and freedom and may regard themselves as not only the torch-bearers and interpreters of knowledge and conquerors of new realms of thought but also as makers of men and women, of leaders and workers, true and brave, upright and patriotic. Our ideal is to link up education with the best elements of our culture and

civilization, drawing strength, wherever necessary, from the fountain of Western skill and knowledge. Our ideal is to make our universities and educational institutions the home of liberty and sane and progressive thought—generously assisted by the State and the public—where teachers and students will meet and work in an atmosphere of harmony and mutual understanding, where none will suffer on grounds of caste, sex, creed, and religious or political belief.

I realise we cannot expect to attain this ideal in the immediate future. But what is essential is a searching and systematic examination of our educational needs and the formulation of our ideal. If Bengal is to take a leading part in the task of national reconstruction, the present atmosphere of distrust and suspicion must go for ever. Let us all, —the University, the State and the educated public belonging to all communities—gather our forces together and combine resolutely, first, to determine the path of future reforms most suited to our environments and national development and, next, to agree to the means for carrying our project into execution.

If Your Excellency, as Chancellor of this University which has been the mouthpiece of the hopes and aspirations of generations of men and women, can help to discover and fulfil the conditions of this united action and lay the foundations for the gigantic task of educational reconstruction, you will

be earning the everlasting gratitude of the people of Bengal. Let me conclude by saying that in the formulation of any scheme of reform which is calculated to enhance the well-being of the people and to raise the fame and prestige of our province, which has done so much for the advancement of Indian nationalism, you may always depend upon the ready and spontaneous co-operation not only of the University but of the entire educated public of Bengal.

7—1177B

The 17th February, 1937

Syamaprasad Mookerjee, Esq., M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-Law, M.L.C.,

Vice-Chancellor

YOUR EXCELLENCY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Twelve months have rapidly gone by since we last met in Convocation and it is again my pleasant duty to extend to you all a cordial welcome on behalf of the University. Circumstances beyond our control and anticipation forced us to cancel our ceremony on Saturday last and we sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to the large number of our guests and students. We could not meet this year in the historic hall of Senate House which is proving inadequate for the ever-increasing number of graduates awaiting to be admitted to their degrees. We have therefore assembled within the precincts of our nearest neighbour, an ancient institution, rich with noble traditions, and a nursery of generations of men devoted to the welfare of their country.

In another respect we have departed to-day from an age-long custom. The principal address at

to-day's Convocation is to be delivered not by any one directly connected with the University, but by an eminent guest to whom I offer, on behalf of the University and of you all, a sincere and respectful welcome. Last year, at the suggestion of the Chancellor, we decided to make this departure in our programme. We approached the Poet with our invitation but circumstances prevented him from complying with our request. As the University wanted to have him and none else to deliver the first address, we repeated our invitation this year. Patience has brought its reward and we genuinely rejoice to have the Poet in our midst to-day. To the University he does not come as a stranger. We feel proud to count him as one of our honorary graduates, who has all along taken deep interest in the development of study and research in Bengali at this University and who was himself for some time associated with this department.

His presence at the Convocation at a time when we are about to launch upon a vigorous policy of making our mother-tongue the basis of instruction and examination is not without significance. The new regulations for the Matriculation Examination are now being introduced in our schools and we confidently expect that they will mark the beginning of a new epoch of cultural development. We can never remain satisfied with making the language of the province the medium of instruction in high schools. That constitutes only one of the

means which the University must adopt in order to instil a new life and vigour into its educational system. The University has recently decided to invite the co-operation of well-known writers in bringing out a series of books in Bengali dealing with various subjects, in arts, science, politics, history, sociology, economics and religion, written in a manner which will make useful knowledge accessible to all. This scheme is fraught with great possibilities not merely for the growth of Bengali literature but also for raising the standard of intellectual equipment of the province as a whole, affecting the outlook and activities of every Bengali anxious to make his contribution towards the solidarity of national resources.

I do not propose in my address to-day to deal exhaustively with the varied activities of the University during the past year. I should, however, assure the members of the Convocation and the sympathetic public that, notwithstanding difficulties and obstacles, we have tried to keep the flag of progress flying. Our teachers and advanced students have nobly carried on their duty of making contributions to the advancement of knowledge and progress of ideas in diverse branches of Arts and Science. Although English was never prescribed as the necessary language for a thesis, we have to-day awarded for the first time the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to a successful candidate who wrote his thesis in Bengali and for this he deserves our special

congratulations. We have steadily encouraged higher study and research by young and brilliant workers whose singe-minded pursuit of learning deserves the highest commendation.

We have adhered to the practice of sending out selected teachers and scholars to foreign seats of learning and they worthily represented us in various countries in Europe, in the United States of America, in South America and in the Far East. In the selection of their subjects for study and investigation, we have paid attention to the needs of various branches of Arts and Science, and have laid due emphasis on technical and industrial training. One of our scholars, himself suffering from blindness from the beginning of his educational career, has been sent to America where he is being specially instructed in the methods for the education of the blind. We have invited distinguished scholars and visitors to come to this University and deliver courses of lectures for the benefit of our teachers and students, one of whom is Sir William Holdsworth, the eminent English writer of Legal History, who has agreed to visit Calcutta next cold weather. Here I may recall that our invitation to the Indian Science Congress to hold its joint-session with the British Association in Calcutta in January, 1938 has been accepted and we expect that our city will be the temporary home of eminent men of science gathered from all parts of the

world and also of fellow-workers from other parts of India.

We have continued the task of publishing valuable books and treatises on various subjects like history and politics, language and literature, religion and philosophy, law, mathematics, anthropology and fine arts, mainly contributed by our teachers and advanced students. In addition to the journals of the Departments of Letters and Science, we have been helping in the publication of as many as six journals of scientific societies whose activities are not confined either to this city or province, thereby aiming at the dissemination of knowledge affecting the intellectual status of India as a whole. The syllabuses and curricula in several subjects in the Faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine and Engineering have been revised, thus raising their standards and extending their scope and utility.

The work of the Teachers' Training Department has expanded and it was called upon to look after the needs of about 500 school teachers in the course of the year. We are glad to find that the increased library facilities are being taken advantage of by our professors and students, and as many as 93,000 volumes were issued to them during the year as against 46,000 last year. The Students' Welfare Department, the University Rowing Club, the University Training Corps, the Athletic Club and other bodies entrusted with the organisation of the health and welfare of the students have

actively carried on their work and have gained in strength, efficiency and popularity. We are going ahead with the details of the schemes of women's education, of military studies and of business and industrial training recently adopted by the Senate. As regards endowments we express our gratitude to Mrs. Biva Mookerjee for her gift of Rs. 23,000 intended for medical research in memory of her late husband Captain Kalyan Kumar Mookerjee, the first Bengali to have won the Military Cross, who died in Turkey while a prisoner of war. I have also to announce a donation of Rs. 25,000 for the department of Communication Engineering from the Charity Trust Fund created by the late Rai Bahadur Mokhram Kanodia of Howrah, thanks to the kindness and generosity of his heirs. Till now this is the largest gift to this University made by the Marwari community and I confidently hope it will be followed by others.

Though these and other activities of the University represent the deliberate efforts on the part of its members to serve the cause of education and progress, let me assure you that we always feel impressed by the fact that much yet remains to be done, if we are ever to help the University to attain its cherished goal. We summoned the other day a conference of principals of affiliated colleges and I rejoice to say that we witnessed there, as indeed we witness in other directions, a genuine desire to combine all available resources and strive whole-heart-

edly for increasing the strength and efficiency of our educational institutions, thus further advancing the usefulness of the University. There is so much work to be done in the ever-expanding sphere of education that it may well occupy the lifelong labours of generations of sincere and unselfish men and women belonging to all classes and communities. We want men and workers; we want freedom to initiate new and far-reaching policies of expansion and improvement. Above all, let me reiterate that no reform of an extensive character will ever be attained unless both the State and public-spirited citizens offer their generous assistance to the University and to its colleges and schools.

Fellow-graduates, you are about to enter the arena of life at one of the most critical periods of the history of our province. While you will demand from the University and the educational institutions the right type of training and instruction which will make you men of character, full of vital impulses and ready to take an active and honourable part in all spheres of life, the University cannot obviously undertake the responsibility of finding a suitable career for each and every one of you. I do not claim that the instruction and training that we are imparting to-day are entirely of the right type or that the response which the students give is always adequate and satisfactory. But you must have noticed that we are steadily attempting to reorganise our system so that it may better serve

the changing needs of the country and respond to the living problems of life. So far as lies in our power, we will continue to work in that direction, notwithstanding obstacles and opposition.

But the great problem of the hour is not merely to provide the right kind of training, not merely to save the educational system from being turned into a soulless machine, but to rouse public opinion and to focus the attention of all on the supreme necessity of finding new avenues of occupation and fresh vocations and careers for the hundreds and thousands of youths who are being produced by our Universities. We resolutely oppose the policy of restricting education, urged on the ground that suitable opportunities for work cannot be found for all University-trained men. We do so, not on any abstract principle nor for any sentimental reason. We do so, because we firmly believe that if our country is to be raised to an independent status, enjoying liberty and self-respect, it can be done primarily through the agency of unselfish and patriotic youths, men and women who shine in deeds and not in words, who in their thousands will be called upon to dedicate their lives to the task of social and educational, economic and agricultural, industrial and political uplift of the millions of their brethren, whose voice to-day is choked under the deadening influence of poverty and disease, of strife and dissension, of ignorance and superstition.

Who, I ask, can ever undertake this gigantic

task of national reconstruction, which will signify the emergence of our Motherland from the shackles of oppression and servility, but a race of Indian youths, proud of their culture and traditions, armed with Western skill and knowledge, fearless and straightforward, determined to work and stand united under a common banner of progress and service? The men are here and more will come if we want them. There stand the mighty problems of reconstruction, apparently baffling solution. This stupendous task cannot be directly organised by any seat of learning, whose duty will be mainly to provide society with men and women trained according to correct systems and ideals. In the corporate interest of the nation, it will be the paramount duty of the State and of men and organizations capable of influencing our destinies, not to permit so much idealism, enthusiasm and trained skill to be wasted or turned into unproductive and undesirable channels, but to take them up with boldness and sympathy and to employ them in diverse fields of activity, calculated to bring in their train an era of peace, progress and prosperity. Such a project of expansion and constructive work requires for its fulfilment a drastic revision of many of the existing policies of the State and other organisations; it will involve a vast expenditure of money; it will require ceaseless and persistent efforts, combined with courage, honesty and sincerity of purpose, which must never fail in the face

of difficulties and opposition. I fervently hope and trust that it may be given to men and women educated at this University to help to formulate such a far-reaching scheme of national reconstruction, capable of gradual accomplishment, to educate public opinion on its great potentialities, to organise the active support and co-operation of all sections and parties in the community and to place it before the nation as an irresistible demand—a demand which requires fulfilment not for the mere purpose of finding work and occupation for those who are entitled to them, but for the larger interests of the province, for its healthy development and progress and for freeing it from the bondage of perpetual dependence and domination.

The 17th February, 1937

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir John Anderson, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.I.E., D.L.,

Chancellor

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is not my intention to speak at length or to stand between you and the distinguished visitor who this year is delivering the Convocation address.

There are however a few words I should like to say on this last occasion when I shall address you in Convocation as Chancellor of the University. First let me express my congratulations to those who now have received degrees and awards, and my best wishes to the University as a whole for its continued progress and prosperity.

During the years that I have held this high office—for the Chancellorship of a University is a high office—it has not been open to me to develop that degree of intimate and personal relationship with its academic activities, and with those who direct such activities in detail, that more leisured times might have made possible. I have however through the medium of the Vice-Chancellor endeavoured to keep in touch with developments of importance in the policy of the University, both academic and fiscal, and I have followed with special

interest those measures which seemed to me calculated to have the greatest effect on the lives and character of its alumni. Though the office of Chancellor goes automatically to the Governor of Bengal I may fairly say that I have never regarded the Chancellorship as a mere appendage to the Governorship of Bengal—but on the other hand, enjoying as Chancellor the advantage of exceptionally easy access to the Governor, I have always been in a position to lay before the latter as the head of the administration what I have conceived to be the legitimate views of the University.

Looking forward across the very brief span that now separates us from responsible government in Bengal when the Governor himself will normally be relieved of any responsibility for the policy of the State as regards the University, I cannot but think he may still have opportunities for service in the discharge of the office of Chancellor.

I have no desire now to dilate upon this theme or indeed to encroach at all upon matters that may fall within the sphere of party politics, but aware as I constantly am of the profound—I may justly say revolutionary—changes that are upon us in the principles of government in this province I cannot help asking myself in what direction this University can make the greatest contribution to the national life of Bengal; I am tempted to answer as follows—by striving to raise the general level of quality among those who come under its influence

and by inculcating a true conception of constructive leadership. I have used the word quality deliberately because in these days quality is not a characteristic always associated with mass production. To combine the two demands the continuous application of high standards—both in the selection of raw material and in the rejection or remodelling at every stage of components that fail to come up to specification.

I make bold to state as a historical truth that the advancement of a people by their own efforts depends in the main upon two things—first the average standard of quality attained by the people themselves and secondly their inherent capacity to throw up from time to time as circumstances may require leaders of the requisite calibre.

For more than a century and a half it has been a constant feature in the life of this Province that its development has been conditioned by reaction to outside influences. Extraneous influences have sometimes inspired, sometimes restrained, sometimes provoked : and in turn leaders among the people of Bengal have appeared sometimes as enthusiastic propagators, interpreters or adaptors of Western ideas, sometimes as ardent reformers chafing at the slow progress of change, and at other times as rebels against the whole conception of external authority in any form : but always or nearly always reaction to or against external influence has been the stimulus and the focus of interest. In all

that concerns most closely the daily lives of the people of Bengal that stimulus is going to be withdrawn—that focus of interest is going to disappear. No doubt there will be a tendency to keep the stimulus alive, to search and scrutinize the activities of future governments for some trace of the hidden hand of external authority; but such tendencies will not bring any nearer to solution the problems of health, education and economic well-being for which a remedy will be demanded by the people from governments responsible to themselves. The things that matter are no longer to be had from a third party as a boon to be sought or a concession to be wrested: they are to be devised and constructed by those among the people who aspire to leadership. The days of leadership against something are passing and the call will be for leadership to something. I venture to say that if the Universities cannot produce men to answer that call they will fail to fulfil their function in the national life.

It is the function of a leader as I understand it to try and bring out the best among his people and not to hesitate to correct their weaknesses—for every nation and every community has its weaknesses: if instead leaders of the people try to follow the easier course—to appeal to weaknesses or to encourage tendencies that they know to be adverse to sound development—then the result will be not progress but decline and disaster.

I have put these thoughts forward because it has been long in my mind to do so and I can think of no better place to speak them out frankly than in the precincts of this University.

To elaborate them would render me suspect of attempting to deliver a Convocation address of my own, and I assure you that having myself suggested the delivery of that address by a distinguished visitor I have no intention of usurping his place.

Let me now stand aside and leave you to hear one who in the world of letters long ago discarded the easy path and in face of criticism and opposition sought out and developed the latent strength and beauty of the Bengali language. I have been told on good authority that some thirty years ago when the suggestion, ultimately given effect.to at the instance of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee in 1913, was first mooted, that the degree of Doctor of Literature should be conferred on Rabindranath, objections were raised on the ground that he was not a Bengali scholar. But his creative leadership in the world of letters has won its own recognition and to-day we are to listen for the first time to a Convocation address in Bengali by one who has earned the right to rank as a leader among the creators of the modern language of Bengal.

The 17th February, 1937

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, N.L., D.Litt.

বিদ্যাধিনায়ক মহামান্য বঙ্গরাষ্ট্রপালমহোদয়, বিদ্যোপনায়ক শ্রীযুক্ত শ্যামাপ্রসাদ, সমবেত ছাত্র ও আগন্তুক-মণ্ডলী,

কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পদবী-সম্মান-বিতরণের বার্ষিক অনুষ্ঠানে আজ আমি আহূত। আমার জীর্ণ শরীরের অপটুতা এই দায়িত্বভার গ্রহণের প্রতিকূল ছিল। কিন্তু অদ্যকার একটি বিশেষ গৌরবের উপলক্ষ আমাকে সমস্ত বাধার উপর দিয়ে আকর্ষণ করে এনেছে। আজ বাংলাদেশের প্রথমতম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আপন ছাত্রদের মাঙ্গল্য-বিধানের শুভকর্মে বাংলার বাণীকে বিদ্যামন্দিরের উচ্চ বেদীতে বরণ করেছেন। বহুদিনের শূন্য আসনের অকল্যাণ আজ দূর হলো।

দুর্ভাগ্য দিনের সকলের চেয়ে দুঃসহ লক্ষণ এই যে সেই দিনে স্বতঃস্বীকার্য্য সত্যকেও বিরোধের কণ্ঠে জানাতে হয়। এদেশে অনেক কাল জানিয়ে আসতে হয়েছে যে, পরভাষার মধ্য দিয়ে পরিশ্রুত শিক্ষায় বিদ্যার প্রাণীন পদার্থ নষ্ট হয়ে যায়।

ভারতবর্ষ ছাড়া পৃথিবীর অন্য কোনো দেশেই শিক্ষার ভাষা এবং শিক্ষার্থীর ভাষার মধ্যে আত্মীয়তাবিচ্ছেদের অস্বাভাবিকতা দেখা যায় না। য়ুরোপীয় বিদ্যায় জাপানের দীক্ষা এক শতাব্দীও পার হয়নি। তার বিদ্যারম্ভের প্রথম সূচনায় শিক্ষণীয় বিষয়গুলি অগত্যা বিদেশী ভাষাকে আশ্রয়

করতে বাধ্য হয়েছিল। কিন্তু প্রথম থেকেই শিক্ষাবিধির একান্ত লক্ষ্য ছিল স্বদেশী ভাষার অধিকারে স্বাধীন সঞ্চরণ লাভ করা। কেননা যে-বিদ্যাকে আধুনিক জাপান অভ্যর্থনা করেছিল সে কেবলমাত্র বিশেষ সুযোগপ্রাপ্ত সঙ্কীর্ণ শ্রেণীবিশেষের অলঙ্কার প্রসাধনের সামগ্রী ব'লেই আদরণীয় হয়নি, নির্বিশেষে সমগ্র মহাজাতিকেই শক্তি দেবে শ্রী দেবে ব'লেই ছিল তার আমন্ত্রণ। এই জন্যই এই শিক্ষার সর্ব্বজনগম্যতা ছিল অত্যাবশ্যক। যে শিক্ষা ঈর্ষাপরায়ণ শক্তিশালী জাতিদের দস্যুবৃত্তি থেকে জাপানকে আত্মরক্ষায় সামর্থ্য দেবে, যে শিক্ষা নগণ্যতা থেকে উদ্ধার ক'রে মানবের মহাসভায় তাকে সম্মানের অধিকারী করবে, সেই শিক্ষার প্রসারসাধন-চেষ্টায় অর্থে বা অধ্যবসায়ে সে লেশমাত্র কৃপণতা করেনি। সকলের চেয়ে অনর্থকর কৃপণতা বিদ্যাকে বিদেশী ভাষার অন্তরালে দূরত্ব দান করা—ফসলের বিস্তীর্ণ মাঠকে বাইরে শুকিয়ে রেখে বিলাতী টবের গাছকে আঙিনায় এনে জলসেচন করা। দীর্ঘকাল ধ'রে আমাদের প্রতি ভাগ্যের এই অবজ্ঞা আমরা সহজেই স্বীকার ক'রে এসেছি। নিজের সম্বন্ধে অশ্রদ্ধা শিরোধার্য করতে অভ্যস্ত হয়েছি, জেনেছি যে, সম্মুখবর্ত্তী কয়েকটিমাত্র জনবিরল পঙ্‌ক্তিতে ছোটো হাতার মাপে ব্যয়কুণ্ঠ পরিবেষণকেই বলে দেশের এডুকেশন। বিদ্যাদানের এই অকিঞ্চিৎকরত্বকে পেরিয়ে যেতে পারে শিক্ষার এমন ঔদার্যের কথা ভাবতেই আমাদের সাহস হয়নি, যেমন সাহারা-মরুবাসী বেদুয়িনরা ভাবতেই সাহস পায় না যে, দূরবিক্ষিপ্ত কয়েকটি ক্ষুদ্র ওয়েসিসের বাইরে ব্যাপক সফলতায় তাদের ভাগ্যের সম্মতি থাকতে পারে। আমাদের দেশে শিক্ষা ও অশিক্ষার মধ্যে যে প্রভেদ সে ঐ সাহারা ও ওসেসিসেরই মতো, অর্থাৎ পরিমাণগত ভেদ এবং জাতিগত

ভেদ। আমাদের দেশের রাষ্ট্রশাসন এক, কিন্তু শিক্ষার সঙ্কোচবশত চিত্তশাসন এক হোতে পারেনি। বর্তমানকালে চীন জাপান পারস্য আরব তুরস্কে প্রাচ্য-জাতীয়দের মধ্যে সর্বত্রই এই ব্যর্থতাজনক আত্মবিচ্ছিন্নতার প্রতিকার হয়েছে, হয়নি কেবলমাত্র আমাদেরই দেশে।

প্রাণীবিবরণে দেখা যায় এক জাতীয় জীব আছে যারা পরাসক্ত হয়ে জন্মায়, পরাসক্ত হয়েই মরে। পরের অঙ্গীভূত হয়ে কেবলমাত্র প্রাণধারণে তাদের বাধা ঘটে না, কিন্তু নিজের অঙ্গপ্রত্যঙ্গের পরিণতি ও ব্যবহারে তারা চিরদিনই থাকে পঙ্গু হয়ে। আমাদের বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষা সেই জাতীয়। আরম্ভ থেকেই এই শিক্ষা বিদেশী ভাষার আশ্রয়ে পরজীবী। একেবারেই যে তার পোষণ হয় না তা নয় কিন্তু তার পূর্ণতা হওয়া অসাধ্য। আত্মশক্তি ব্যবহারে সে যে পঙ্গু হয়ে আছে সে কথা সে আপনি অনুভব করতেও অক্ষম হয়ে পড়েছে কেননা ঋণ ক'রে তার দিন চলে যায়। গৌরব বোধ করে এই ঋণলাভের পরিমাণ হিসাব ক'রে। মহাজন-মহলে সে দাসখৎ লিখিয়ে দিয়েছে। যারা এই শিক্ষায় পার হলো তারা যা ভোগ করে তা উৎপন্ন করে না। পরের ভাষায় পরের বুদ্ধি-দ্বারা চিন্তিত বিষয়ের প্রশ্রয় পেয়ে স্বাভাবিক প্রণালীতে নিজে চিন্তা করবার, বিশ্লেষণ ও সংশ্লেষণ করবার আন্তরিক প্রেরণা ও সাহস তাদের দুর্বল হয়ে আসে। পরের কথিত বাণীর আবৃত্তি যতই যন্ত্রের মতো অবিকল হয় ততই তারা পরীক্ষায় কৃতার্থ হবার অধিকারী ব'লে গণ্য হোতে থাকে। বলা বাহুল্য যে, পরাসক্ত মনকে এই চিরদৈন্য থেকে মুক্ত করবার একটা প্রধান উপায়, শিক্ষণীয় বিষয়কে শিশুকাল থেকে নিজের ভাষার ভিতর দিয়ে গ্রহণ করা ও প্রয়োগ করার চর্চা। কে না জানে আহার্যকে আপন প্রাণের সামগ্রী ক'রে নেবার উপায়

হচ্চে ভোজ্যকে নিজের দাঁত দিয়ে চিবিয়ে নিজের রসনার রসে জারিয়ে নেওয়া।

এ প্রসঙ্গে এ কথা স্বীকার করা চাই যে, আমাদের বিশ্ব-বিদ্যালয়ে ইংরেজি ভাষার সম্মানের আসন বিচলিত হোতে পারবে না। তার কারণ এ নয় যে, বর্তমান অবস্থায় আমাদের জীবনযাত্রায় তার প্রয়োজনীয়তা অপরিহার্য। আজকের দিনে য়ুরোপের জ্ঞানবিজ্ঞান সমস্ত মানবলোকের শ্রদ্ধা অধিকার করেছে; স্বাজাত্যের অভিমানে এ কথা অস্বীকার করলে অকল্যাণ। আর্থিক ও রাষ্ট্রিক ক্ষেত্রে আত্মরক্ষার পক্ষে এই শিক্ষার যেমন প্রয়োজন তেমনি মনকে ও ব্যবহারকে মূঢ়তামুক্ত করবার জন্য তার প্রভাব মূল্যবান্। যে চিত্ত এই প্রভাবকে প্রতিরোধ করে, এ'কে অঙ্গীকার ক'রে নিতে অক্ষম হয়, সে আপন সঙ্কীর্ণসীমাবদ্ধ নিরালোক জীবযাত্রায় ক্ষীণজীবী হয়ে থাকে। যে জ্ঞানের জ্যোতি চিরন্তন তা যে কোনো দিগন্ত থেকেই বিকীর্ণ হোক অপরিচিত ব'লে তাকে বাধা দেয় বর্বরতার অস্বচ্ছ মন। সত্যের প্রকাশ-মাত্রই জাতি-বর্ণ-নির্বিশেষে সকল মানুষের অধিকারগম্য; এই অধিকার মনুষ্যত্বের সহজাত অধিকারেরই অঙ্গ। রাষ্ট্রগত বা ব্যক্তিগত বিষয়-সম্পদে মানুষের পার্থক্য অনিবার্য কিন্তু চিত্ত-সম্পদের দানসত্রে সর্বদেশে সর্বকালে মানুষ এক। সেখানে দান করবার দাক্ষিণ্যেই দাতা ধন্য ও গ্রহণ করবার শক্তি-দ্বারাই গ্রহীতার আত্মসম্মান। সকল দেশেই অর্থভাণ্ডারের দ্বারে কড়া পাহারা, কিন্তু বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের জ্ঞানভাণ্ডারে সর্বমানবের ঐক্যের দ্বার অর্গলবিহীন। লক্ষ্মী কৃপণ, কারণ লক্ষ্মীর সঞ্চয় সংখ্যা-গণিতের সীমায় আবদ্ধ, ব্যয়ের দ্বারা তার ক্ষয় হোতে থাকে; সরস্বতী অকৃপণ, কেননা সংখ্যার পরিমাপে তার ঐশ্বর্যের পরিমাপ নয়, দানের দ্বারা তার বৃদ্ধিই ঘটে। বোধ করি,

বিশেষভাবে বাংলাদেশের এই গৌরব করবার কারণ আছে যে, য়ুরোপীয় সংস্কৃতির কাছ থেকে সে আপন প্রাপ্য গ্রহণ করতে বিলম্ব করেনি। এই সংস্কৃতির বাধাহীন সংস্পর্শে অতি অল্পকালের মধ্যে তার সাহিত্য প্রচুর শক্তি ও সম্পদ্ লাভ করেছে, এ কথা সকলের স্বীকৃত। এই প্রভাবের প্রধান সার্থকতা এই দেখেছি যে, অনুকরণের দুর্বল প্রবৃত্তিকে কাটিয়ে ওঠবার উৎসাহ সে প্রথম থেকে দিয়েছে। আমাদের দেশে ইংরেজি শিক্ষার প্রথম যুগে যাঁরা বিদ্বান্ ব'লে গণ্য ছিলেন তাঁরা যদিচ পড়াশুনোয় চিঠিপত্রে কথাবার্তায় একান্তভাবেই ইংরেজি ভাষা ব্যবহারে অভ্যস্ত হয়েছিলেন, যদিচ তখনকার ইংরেজি-শিক্ষিত চিত্তে চিন্তার ঐশ্বর্য, ভাবরসের আয়োজন মুখ্যত ইংরেজি প্রেরণা থেকেই উদ্ভাবিত, তবু সেদিনকার বাঙালি লেখকেরা এই কথাটি অচিরে অনুভব করেছিলেন যে, দূরদেশি ভাষার থেকে আমরা বাতির আলো সংগ্রহ করতে পারি মাত্র, কিন্তু আত্মপ্রকাশের জন্য প্রভাত-আলো বিকীর্ণ হয় আপন ভাষায়। পরভাষার মদগর্বে আত্মবিস্মৃতির দিনে এই সহজ কথার নূতন আবিষ্কৃতির দুটি উজ্জ্বল দৃষ্টান্ত দেখেছি আমাদের নবসাহিত্য-সৃষ্টির উপক্রমেই। ইংরেজি ভাষায় ও সাহিত্যে মাইকেলের অধিকার ছিল প্রশস্ত, অনুরাগ ছিল সুগভীর। সেই সঙ্গে গ্রীক লাটিন আয়ত্ত ক'রে য়ুরোপীয় সাহিত্যের অমরাবতীতে তিনি আমন্ত্রিত হয়েছেন ও তৃপ্ত হয়েছেন সেখানকার অমৃতরস-ভোগে। স্বভাবতই প্রথমে তাঁর মন গিয়েছিল ইংরেজি ভাষায় কাব্য রচনা করতে। কিন্তু এ কথা বুঝতে তাঁর বিলম্ব হয়নি যে, ধার-করা ভাষায় সুদ দিতে হয় অত্যধিক, তার উদ্বৃত্ত থাকে অতি সামান্য। তিনি প্রথমেই মাতৃভাষায় এমন একটি কাব্যের আবাহন করলেন যে-কাব্যে স্খলিতগতি প্রথম-পদচারণার ভীরু

সতর্কতা নেই। এই কাব্যে বাহিরের গঠনে আছে বিদেশী আদর্শ, অন্তরে আছে কৃত্তিবাসী বাঙালি কল্পনার সাহায্যে মিল্‌টন-হোমর-প্রতিভার অতিথি-সৎকার। এই আতিথ্যে অগৌরব নেই, এতে নিজের শক্তির প্রমাণ হয় এবং নিজের ঐশ্বর্যের হোতে থাকে।

এই যেমন কাব্য-সাহিত্যে মধুসূদন, তেমনি আধুনিক বাংলা গদ্য-সাহিত্যের পথ-মুক্তির আদিতে আছেন বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র। কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সর্বপ্রথম ছাত্রদের মধ্যে তিনি ছিলেন একজন বরণীয় ব্যক্তি। বলা বাহুল্য, তাঁর চিত্ত অনুপ্রাণিত হয়েছিল প্রধানভাবে ইংরেজি শিক্ষায়। ইংরেজি কথা-সাহিত্য থেকে তিনি যে প্ররোচনা পেয়েছিলেন তাকে প্রথমেই ইংরেজি ভাষায় রূপ দিতে চেষ্টা করেছেন। সেই চেষ্টার অকৃতার্থতা বুঝতে তাঁর বিলম্ব হয়নি। কিন্তু যেহেতু বিদেশী শিক্ষা থেকে তিনি যথার্থ সংস্কৃতি লাভ করেছিলেন তাই সেই সংস্কৃতিই তাঁকে আপন সার্থকতার সন্ধানে স্বদেশী ভাষায় টেনে এনেছিল। যেমন দূর গিরিশিখরের জলপ্রপাত যখন শৈলবক্ষ ছেড়ে প্রবাহিত হয় জনস্থানের মধ্য দিয়ে, তখন দুই তীরবর্তী ক্ষেত্রগুলিকে ফলবান্ ক'রে তোলে তাদের নিজেরই ভূমি-উদ্ভিন্ন ফলশস্যে, তেমনি নূতন শিক্ষাকে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ফলবান ক'রে তুলেছেন নিজেরই ভাষাপ্রকৃতির স্বকীয় দানের দ্বারা। তার আগে বাংলাভাষায় গদ্য-প্রবন্ধ ছিল ইস্কুলে পোড়োদের উপদেশের বাহন। বঙ্কিমের আগে বাঙালি শিক্ষিত-সমাজ নিশ্চিত স্থির করেছিলেন যে তাঁদের ভাব-রস-ভোগের ও সত্য-সন্ধানের উপকরণ একান্তভাবে য়ুরোপীয় সাহিত্য হতেই সংগ্রহ করা সম্ভব, কেবল অল্পশিক্ষিতদের ধাত্রীবৃত্তি করবার জন্যেই দরিদ্র বাংলাভাষার যোগ্যতা। কিন্তু বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ইংরেজি শিক্ষার পরিণত শক্তিকেই রূপ দিতে প্রবৃত্ত হলেন

বাংলাভাষায় বঙ্গদর্শন মাসিকপত্রে। বস্তুত নবযুগপ্রবর্ত্তক প্রতিভাবানের সাধনায় ভারতবর্ষে সর্বপ্রথমে বাংলাদেশেই য়ুরোপীয় সংস্কৃতির ফসল ভাবী কালের প্রত্যাশা নিয়ে দেখা দিয়েছিল, বিদেশ থেকে আনীত পণ্য-আকারে নয়, স্বদেশের ভূমিতে উৎপন্ন শস্যসম্পদের মতো। সেই শস্যের বীজ যদিবা বিদেশ থেকে উড়ে এসে আমাদের ক্ষেত্রে পড়ে থাকে তবু তার অঙ্কুরিত প্রাণ এখানকার মাটিরই। মাটি যাকে গ্রহণ করতে পারে সে ফসল বিদেশী হোলেও আর বিদেশী থাকে না। আমাদের দেশের বহু ফলেফুলে তার পরিচয় আছে।

ইংরেজি শিক্ষার সার্থকতা আমাদের সাহিত্যে বঙ্গীয় দেহ নিয়ে বিচরণ করছে বাংলার ঘরে ঘরে, এই প্রদেশের শিক্ষানিকেতনেও সে তেমনি আমাদের অন্তরঙ্গ হয়ে দেখা দেবে এ জন্য অনেকদিন আমাদের মাতৃভূমি অপেক্ষা করেছে।

বাংলার বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আপন স্বাভাবিক ভাষায় স্বদেশে সর্বজনের আত্মীয়তা লাভে গৌরবান্বিত হবে সেই আশার সঙ্কেত আজকের দিনের অনুষ্ঠানের মধ্য দিয়ে প্রকাশ করার সুযোগ আমি পেয়েছি, তাই সমস্ত বাংলাদেশের গর্ব ও আনন্দ বহন ক'রে এই সভায় আজ আমার উপস্থিতি।

নতুবা এখানে স্থান পাবার মতো প্রবেশিকার মূল্য দেওয়া আমার দ্বারা সাধ্য হয়নি। আমার জীবনে প্রথম বয়সে স্বল্পক্ষণস্থায়ী ছাত্রদশা কেটেছে অভ্রভেদী শিক্ষাসৌধের অধস্তন তলায়। তারপরে কিশোর বয়সে অভিভাবকদের নির্দেশমতো একদিন সসঙ্কোচে আমি প্রবেশ করেছিলুম বহিরঙ্গ ছাত্ররূপে প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের প্রথম-বার্ষিক শ্রেণীতে। সেই এক দিন আর দ্বিতীয় দিনে পৌঁছল না। আকারে প্রকারে সমস্ত

ক্লাশের সঙ্গে আমার এমন কিছু ছন্দের ব্যত্যয় ছিল যাতে আমাকে দেখবামাত্র পরিহাস উঠল উচ্ছ্বসিত হয়ে। বুঝলুম, মণ্ডলীর বাহির থেকে অসামঞ্জস্য নিয়ে এসেছি। পরের দিন থেকেই অনধিকার-প্রবেশের দুঃসাহসিকতা থেকে বিরত হয়েছিলেম, এবং আর যে কোনো দিন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের চৌকাঠ পার হয়ে অধিকারীবর্গের একপাশে স্থান পাব এমন দুরাশা আমার মনে ছিল না। অবশেষে একদিন মাতৃভাষার সাধনা-পুণ্যেই আজ সেই দুর্লভ অধিকার আমার মিলবে সেদিন তা স্বপ্নের অতীত ছিল।

বর্তমান যুগ য়ুরোপীয় সভ্যতা কর্তৃক সম্পূর্ণ অধিকৃত এ কথা মানতেই হবে। এই যুগ একটি বিশেষ উদ্যমশীল চিত্তপ্রকৃতির ভূমিকা সমস্ত জগতে প্রবর্তিত করছে। মানুষের বুদ্ধিগত জ্ঞানগত বিচিত্র চিন্তা ও কর্ম নব নব আকার নিচ্চে এই ভূমিকার পরেই। বুদ্ধি-পরিশীলনার বিশেষ গতি ও বিস্তৃতি সভ্য পৃথিবী জুড়ে সমস্ত মানুষের মধ্যেই একটা ঐক্য-লাভে প্রবৃত্ত হয়েছে। বিজ্ঞান, সাহিত্য, ইতিহাস, অর্থনীতি, রাষ্ট্রনীতি প্রভৃতি সকল বিষয়ই এবং চিন্তা করবার পদ্ধতি, সন্ধান করবার প্রণালী, সত্য যাচাই করবার আদর্শ, য়ুরোপীয় চিত্তের ভূমিকার উপরে উদ্ভাবিত ও আলোচিত হচ্চে। এটা সম্ভবপর হোতই না, যদি এর উপযোগিতা সর্বত্র নিয়ত পরীক্ষার দ্বারা স্বীকৃত না হোত, যদি-না এই চিত্ত জয়যুক্ত হোত তার সর্বপ্রকার অধ্যবসায়ে। সংসারযাত্রার কৃতার্থতা-লাভের জন্য আজ পৃথিবীতে সকল নবজাগ্রত দেশই য়ুরোপের এই চিত্তস্রোতকে জনসাধারণের মধ্যে প্রবাহিত ক'রে দেবার চেষ্টায় অবিরাম প্রবৃত্ত। সর্বত্রই বিদ্যালয় ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়গুলি প্রজাদের মনঃক্ষেত্রে ব্যাপকভাবে নববিদ্যা-সেচনের প্রণালী। এমন দেশও প্রত্যক্ষ দেখেছি নবযুগের

প্রভাবে যে আজ বহু দীর্ঘ শতাব্দীর উপেক্ষাসঞ্চিত স্তূপাকার নিরক্ষরতার বাধা অল্পকালের মধ্যে আশ্চর্য শক্তিতে উত্তীর্ণ হয়েছে, সেখানে যে জন-মন একদা ছিল অখ্যাত আকারে আত্মপ্রকাশহীন অকৃতিত্বে লুপ্তপ্রায়, সে আজ অবারিত শক্তি নিয়ে মানবসমাজের পুরোভাগে সসম্মানে অগ্রসর। এ দিকে যথোচিত অর্থ-অভাবে শ্রদ্ধা-অভাবে উৎসাহ-অভাবে দীনসম্বল আমাদের দেশের বিদ্যানিকেতনগুলি স্বল্পপরিমিত ছাত্রদেরকে স্বল্পমাত্র বিদ্যায় পরীক্ষা পার করবার স্বল্পায়তন খেয়ানৌকোর কাজ ক'রে চলেছে। দেশের আত্মচেতনাহারা বিরাট্ মনকে স্পর্শ করছে তার প্রান্ততম সীমায়, সে স্পর্শও ক্ষীণ, যেহেতু তা প্রাণবান্ নয়, যেহেতু সে স্পর্শ আসছে বহিঃস্থিত আবরণের বাধার ভিতর দিয়ে। এই কারণে প্রাচ্য-মহাদেশের যে-যে অংশে নব-দিনের উদ্বোধন দেখা দিয়েছে, জ্ঞানজ্যোতির্বিকীর্ণ আত্মপরিচয়ের সম্মান-লাভে তাদের সকলের থেকে বহুদূর পশ্চাতে আছে ভারতবর্ষ।

আমার এবং বাংলাদেশের লেখকবর্গের হয়ে আমি এ কথা বলব যে আমরা নবযুগের সংস্কৃতিকে দেশের মর্মস্থানে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করবার কাজ ক'রে আসছি। বর্তমান যুগের নূতন বিদ্যাকে দেশের প্রাণনিকেতনে চিরন্তন করবার এই স্বতঃসক্রিয় উদ্যোগকে অনেকদিন পর্যন্ত আমাদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আপন আমন্ত্রণ-ক্ষেত্র থেকে পৃথক্ ক'রে রেখেছেন, তাকে ভিন্ন জাতীয় ব'লে গণ্য করেছেন। আশুতোষ সর্বপ্রথমে এই বিচ্ছেদের মধ্যে সেতু বেঁধেছিলেন যখন তিনি আমার মতো বাংলাভাষাচর লেখককে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ডাক্তার উপাধি দিতে সাহস করলেন। সে দিন যথেষ্ট সাহসের প্রয়োজন ছিল। কারণ ইংরেজি ভাষা-সম্পর্কে কৃত্রিম কৌলিন্যগর্ব আদিকাল থেকেই এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অন্তরে অন্তরে সংস্কারগত হয়ে গিয়েছিল।

কিন্তু আশুতোষ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পরভাষাশ্রিত আভিজাত্য-বোধকে অকস্মাৎ আঘাত করতে কুণ্ঠিত হলেন না, বিশ্ব-বিদ্যালয়ের তুঙ্গমঞ্চ চূড়া থেকে তিনিই প্রথম নমস্কার প্রেরণ করলেন তাঁর মাতৃভাষার দিকে। তারপরে তিনিই বাংলা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে বাংলাভাষার ধারাকে অবতারণ করলেন, সাবধানে তার স্রোতঃপথ খনন করে দিলেন। পিতৃনির্দিষ্ট সেই পথকে আজ প্রশস্ত ক'রে দিচ্ছেন তাঁরি সুযোগ্যপুত্র বাংলাদেশের আশীর্ভাজন শ্রীযুক্ত শ্যামাপ্রসাদ। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দীক্ষামন্ত্র থেকে বঞ্চিত আমার মতো ব্রাত্য-বাংলা লেখককে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপাধি দিয়ে আশুতোষ প্রথম রীতি লঙ্ঘন করেছেন, আজ তাঁরই পুত্র সেই ব্রাত্যকেই আজকের দিনের অনুষ্ঠানে বাংলাভাষায় অভিভাষণ পাঠ করতে নিমন্ত্রণ ক'রে পুনশ্চ সেই রীতিরই দুটো গ্রন্থি এক সঙ্গে মুক্ত করেছেন। এতে বোঝা গেল বাংলাদেশে শিক্ষাজগতে ঋতু-পরিবর্তন হয়েছে, পাশ্চাত্ত্য আবহাওয়ার শীতে-আড়ষ্ট শাখায় আজ এল নব-পল্লবের উৎসব।

অন্যত্র ভারতবর্ষে সম্প্রতি এমন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় দেখা দিয়েছে, যেখানে স্থানীয় প্রজাসাধারণের ভাষা না হোক্ পরন্তু শ্রেণী-বিশেষের ব্যবহৃত ভাষা শিক্ষার বাহনরূপে আদ্যোপান্ত গণ্য হয়েছে; এবং সেখানকার প্রধানবর্গ এই দুঃসাধ্য চেষ্টাকে আশ্চর্য সফলতা দিয়ে প্রশংসাভাজন হয়েছেন। এই অচিন্তিতপূর্ব সঙ্কল্প এবং আশাতীত সিদ্ধিও কম গৌরবের বিষয় নয়। কিন্তু কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় যে সাধনায় প্রবৃত্ত হয়েছেন সমস্ত প্রদেশের প্রজাসাধারণ তার লক্ষ্য। বাংলাভাষার অধিকৃত এই প্রদেশের কোনো কোনো অঙ্গ যদিও শাসনকর্তাদের কাটারি-দ্বারা কৃত্রিম বিভাগে বিক্ষত হয়েবহিষ্কৃত হয়েছে, তবু অন্তত ৫ কোটি লোকের

মাতৃভাষাকে এই শিক্ষার কেন্দ্র আপন ভাষারূপে স্বীকার করবার ইচ্ছা ঘোষণা করেছেন। কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্বদেশের প্রতি এই যে সম্মান নিবেদন করলেন এর দ্বারা তিনি আজ সম্মাননীয়। যে শৌর্য়বান্ পুরুষ স্বদেশের এই সৌভাগ্যের সূচনা ক'রে গেছেন আজকের দিনে সেই আশুতোষের প্রতিও আমাদের সম্মান নিবেদন করি।

আমি জানি য়ুরোপীয় শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতার মহত্ত্ব-সম্বন্ধে সুতীব্র প্রতিবাদ জাগবার দিন আজ এসেছে। এই সভ্যতা বস্তুগত ধনসঞ্চয়ে ও শক্তি-আবিষ্কারে অদ্ভুত দ্রুতগতিতে অগ্রসর হচ্চে। কিন্তু সমগ্র মনুষ্যত্বের মহিমা তো তার বাহ্য রূপ এবং বাহ্য উপকরণ নিয়ে নয়। হিংস্রতা, লুব্ধতা, রাষ্ট্রিক কূটনীতির কুটিলতা পাশ্চাত্ত্য মহাদেশ থেকে যে রকম প্রচণ্ড মূর্তি ধ'রে মানুষের স্বাধিকারকে নির্মমভাবে দলন করতে উদ্যত হয়েছে, ইতিহাসে এমন আর কোনদিন হয়নি। মানুষের দুরাকাঙ্ক্ষাকে এমন বৃহৎ আয়তনে, এমন প্রভূত পরিমাণে, এমন সর্ববাধাজয়ী নৈপুণ্যের সঙ্গে জয়যুক্ত করতে কোনো দিন মানুষ সক্ষম হয়নি। আজ তা হোতে পেরেছে বিশ্বপরাভব-কারী বিজ্ঞানের জোরে। উনিশ শতকের আরম্ভে ও মাঝামাঝিকালে যখন য়ুরোপীয় সভ্যতার সঙ্গে আমাদের থম পরিচয় হয়েছিল তখন ভক্তির সঙ্গে আনন্দের সঙ্গে আমাদের মনে প্রবল ধারণা জন্মেছিল যে, এই সভ্যতা সর্বমানবের প্রতি অকৃত্রিম শ্রদ্ধা নিয়ে জগতে আবির্ভূত; নিশ্চিত স্থির করেছিলুম যে, সত্যনিষ্ঠা, ন্যায়পরতা ও মানুষের সম্বন্ধে সুগভীর শ্রেয়োবুদ্ধি এর চরিত্রগত লক্ষণ; ভেবেছিলুম মানুষকে অন্তরে বাহিরে সর্বপ্রকার বন্ধন থেকে মুক্তি দেবার ব্রত এই সভ্যতা গ্রহণ করেছে। দেখতে দেখতে আমাদের জীবিত কালের মধ্যেই তার ন্যায়বুদ্ধি তার মানবমৈত্রী এমনি ক্ষুণ্ণ

হোলো, ক্ষীণ হোলো, যে, বলদর্পিতের পেষণযন্ত্রে পীড়িত মানুষ এই সভ্যতার বিচারসভায় ধর্মের দোহাই দেবে এমন ভরসা আজ কোথাও রইল না। পাশ্চাত্ত্য ভূখণ্ডে যে সকল বিশ্ব-বিশ্রুত দেশ এই সভ্যতার প্রধান বাহন, তারা পরস্পরকে ছিন্নবিচ্ছিন্ন করবার উদ্দেশ্যে পাশব নখদন্তের অদ্ভুত উৎকর্ষ-সাধনে সমস্ত বুদ্ধি ও ঐশ্বর্যকে নিযুক্ত করেছে। মানুষের প্রতি মানুষের এমন অপরিসীম ভীতি, এমন দৃঢ়বদ্ধমূল অবিশ্বাস অন্য কোনো যুগেই দেখা যায়নি। মানবজগতের যে ঊর্ধ্বলোক থেকে আলোক আসে, মুক্তির মন্ত্র যেখানকার বাতাসে সঞ্চারিত হয়, মানবচিত্তের সেই দ্যুলোক রিপুপদদলিত পৃথিবীর উৎক্ষিপ্ত ধূলিতে আবিল, সাংঘাতিক মারীবীজে নিবিড়ভাবে পরিপূর্ণ। ইতিপূর্ব্বে পৃথিবীতে আমরা যে সকল মহামহা সভ্যতার পরিচয় পেয়েছি তাদের প্রধান সাধনা ছিল মানবজগতের ঊর্ধ্বলোককে নির্মল রাখা, সেখানে পুণ্যজ্যোতির বিকিরণকে অবরোধমুক্ত করা। ধর্মের শাশ্বত নীতির প্রতি বিশ্বাসহীন আজকের দিনে এই সাধনা অশ্রদ্ধাভাজন; সমস্ত পৃথিবীকে নিষ্ঠুর শক্তিতে অভিভূত করবার স্বাভাবিক দায়িত্ব নিয়ে এসেছে ব'লে যারা গর্ব করে, এই সাধনা তাদের মতো শাসক ও শোষক জাতির পক্ষে অনুপযুক্ত ব'লে গণ্য। উগ্র লোভের তীব্র মাদকরস-পানে উন্মত্ত সভ্যতার পদভারে কম্পান্বিত সমস্ত পাশ্চাত্ত্য মহাদেশ। যে শিক্ষায় কর্মবুদ্ধির সঙ্গে শুভবুদ্ধির এমন বিচ্ছেদ, যে সভ্যতা অসংযত মোহাবেশে আত্মহননোদ্যত তার গৌরব ঘোষণা করব কোন্ মুখে!

কিন্তু একদিন মনুষ্যত্বের প্রতি সম্মান দেখেছি এই পাশ্চাত্ত্যের সাহিত্যে ও ইতিহাসে। তার নিজেকে নিজেই সে আজ ব্যঙ্গ করলেও তার চিত্তের সেই উদার অভ্যুদয়কে

মরীচিকা ব'লে অস্বীকার করতে পারিনে। তার উজ্জ্বল সত্তাই মিথ্যা এবং তার ম্লান বিকৃতিই সত্য একথা বলব না।

সভ্যতার পদস্খলন ও আত্মখণ্ডন ঘটেছে বারবার, নিজের শ্রেষ্ঠ দানকে সে বারবার নিজে প্রত্যাখ্যান করেছে। এই দুর্ঘটনা দেখেছি আমাদের স্বদেশেও এবং অন্যদেশেও। দেখা গেছে মানবমহিমার শোচনীয় পতন ইতিহাসে পর্বে পর্বে। কিন্তু এই সকল সভ্যতা যেখানে মহামূল্য সত্যকে কোনো দিন কোনো আকারে প্রকাশ করেছে সেইখান থেকেই সে চিরদিনের মতো জয় করেছে মানুষের মনকে; জয় করেছে আপন বাহ্য প্রতাপের ধূলিশায়ী ভগ্নস্তূপের উপরে দাঁড়িয়েও। য়ুরোপ মহৎ শিক্ষার উপাদান উপহার দিয়েছে মানুষকে, দেবার শক্তি যদি না থাকৃত তাহোলে কোনো কালেই তার বিশ্বজয়ের যুগ আসত না এ কথা বলা বাহুল্য। সে দিয়েছে আপন অদম্য শৌর্যের, অসঙ্কুচিত আত্মত্যাগের দৃষ্টান্ত—দেখিয়েছে প্রাণান্তকর প্রয়াস জ্ঞান-বিতরণের কাজে, আরোগ্য-সাধনের উদ্যোগে। আজও এই সাঙ্ঘাতিক অধঃপতনের দিনে য়ুরোপের শ্রেষ্ঠ যাঁরা, নিঃসন্দেহই ন্যায়ের পক্ষে দুর্বলের পক্ষে দুঃশাসনের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদ জাগিয়ে তাঁরা বলদৃপ্তের শাস্তিকে স্বীকার করছেন, দুঃখীর দুঃখকে আপন ক'রে নিচ্ছেন। বারেবারে অকৃতার্থ হোলেও তাঁরাই আশু পরাভবের মধ্য দিয়েও এই সভ্যতার প্রতিভূ। যে প্রেরণায় চারিদিকের কঠোর অত্যাচার ও চরিত্র-বিকৃতির মধ্যে তাঁদের লক্ষ্যকে অবিচলিত রেখেছে সে প্রেরণাই এই সভ্যতার মর্মগত সত্য, তার থেকেই পৃথিবী শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করবে, পাশ্চাত্ত্য জাতির লজ্জাজনক অমানুষিক আত্মাবমাননা থেকে নয়।

তোমরা যে সকল তরুণ ছাত্র আজ এই সভায় উপস্থিত, যারা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সিংহদ্বার দিয়ে জীবনের জয়যাত্রার পথে

অগ্রসর হোতে প্রস্তুত, তোমাদের প্রতি আমার অভিনন্দন জানাই। তোমরাই এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নূতন গৌরব-দিনের প্রভূত সফলতার প্রত্যাশা আগামী কালের পথে বহন করতে যাত্রা করছ।

আজ প্রচণ্ড আলোড়ন উঠেছে পৃথিবীব্যাপী জনসমুদ্রে। যেন সমস্ত সভ্য জগতকে এক কল্প থেকে আর এক কল্পের তটে উৎক্ষিপ্ত করবার জন্যে দেবদৈত্যে মিলে মন্থন সুরু হয়েছে। এবারকারও মন্থনরজ্জু বিষধর সর্প, বহুফণাধারী লোভের সর্প। সে বিষ উদ্গার করছে। আপনার মধ্যে সমস্ত বিষটাকে জীর্ণ ক'রে নেবেন এমন মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শিব পাশ্চাত্ত্য সভ্যতার মর্মস্থানে আসীন আছেন কিনা এখনো তার প্রমাণ পাইনি। ভারতবর্ষে আমরা আছি কালের রুদ্রলীলাসমুদ্রের তটসীমায়। বর্তমান মানব-সমাজের এই দুঃখের আন্দোলনে প্রত্যক্ষভাবে যোগ দেবার উপলক্ষ আমাদের ঘটেনি। কিন্তু ঘূর্ণির টান বাহির থেকে আসছে আমাদের উপরে, এবং ভিতরের থেকেও দুর্গতির ঢেউ আছাড় খেয়ে পড়ছে আমাদের দক্ষিণে বামে। সমস্যার পর দুঃসাধ্য সমস্যা এসে অভিভূত করছে দেশকে। সম্প্রদায়ে সম্প্রদায়ে পরস্পর বিচ্ছেদ ও বিরোধ নানা কদর্য মূর্তিতে প্রকাশিত হয়ে উঠল। বিকৃতি আনলে আমাদের আত্মকল্যাণ-বোধে। এই সমস্যার সমাধান সহজে হবার নয়, সমাধান না হোলেও নিরবচ্ছিন্ন দুর্গতি।

সমস্ত দেশের সংস্কৃতি সৌভ্রাত্র্য সচ্ছলতা একদা বিককীর্ণ ছিল আমাদের গ্রামে। আজ সেখানে প্রবেশ করলে দেখতে পাবে মরণদশা তার বুকে খরনখর বিদ্ধ করেছে একটা রক্তশোষী শ্বাপদের মতো। অনশন ও দুঃখ-দারিদ্র্যের সহচর মজ্জাগত মারী সমস্ত জাতির জীবনী-শক্তিকে জীর্ণজর্জর

ক'রে দিয়েছে। এর প্রতিকার কোথায় সে কথা ভাবতে হবে আমাদের নিজেকে, অশিক্ষিত কল্পনার দ্বারা নয়, ভাব-বিহ্বল দৃষ্টির বাষ্পাকুলতা দিয়ে নয়। এই পণ ক'রে চলতে হবে, যে, পরাস্ত যদি হোতেও হয় তবে সে যেন প্রতিকূল অবস্থার কাছে ভীরুর মতো হাল ছেড়ে দিয়ে নয়, যেন নির্বোধের মতো নির্বিচারে আত্মহত্যার মাঝ-দরিয়ায় ঝাঁপ দিয়ে পড়াকেই গর্বের বিষয় না মনে করি।

ভাবপ্রবণতা আছে আমাদের দেশে অতি পরিমাণে। কর্মোদযোগে নিজেকে অপ্রমত্তভাবে প্রবৃত্ত করতে আমাদের মন যায় না; অবাস্তবের মোহাবেশ কাটিয়ে পুরুষের মতো উজ্জ্বল বুদ্ধির আলোকে দেশের সমস্ত অসম্পূর্ণতা মূঢ়তা কদর্যতা সব-কিছুকে অত্যুক্তি-বর্জিত ক'রে জেনে দৃঢ়-সঙ্কল্পের সঙ্গে দেশের দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করো। যেখানে বাস্তবের ক্ষেত্রে ভাগ্য আমাদের প্রতিদিন বঞ্চিত করে, অবমানিত করে, সেখানে ঘর-গড়া অহঙ্কারে নিজেকে ভোলাবার চেষ্টা দুর্বল চিত্তের দুর্লক্ষণ। সত্যকার কাজ আরম্ভ করার মুখে এ কথা মানাই চাই যে আমাদের সমাজে আমাদের স্বভাবে আমাদের অভ্যাসে আমাদের বুদ্ধিবিকারে গভীরভাবে নিহিত হয়ে আছে আমাদের সর্বনাশ। যখনি আমাদের দুর্গতির সকল দায়িত্ব একমাত্র বাহিরের অবস্থার অথবা অপর কোনো পক্ষের প্রতিকূলতার উপর আরোপ ক'রে বধির শূন্যের অভিমুখে তারস্বরে অভিযোগ ঘোষণা করি তখনি হতাশ্বাস ধৃতরাষ্ট্রের মতো মন ব'লে ওঠে—"তদা নাশংসে বিজয়ায় সঞ্জয়"।

আজ আমাদের অভিযান নিজের অন্তর্নিহিত আত্মশত্রুতার বিরুদ্ধে, প্রাণপণ আঘাত হানতে হবে বহুশতাব্দীনির্মিত মূঢ়তার দুর্গভিত্তিমূলে। আগে নিজের শক্তিকে তামসিকতার জড়িমা থেকে উদ্ধার ক'রে নিয়ে তারপরে পরের শক্তির সঙ্গে

আমাদের সম্মানিত সন্ধি হোতে পারবে। নইলে আমাদের সন্ধি হবে ঋণের জালে ভিক্ষুকতার জালে আষ্টেপৃষ্ঠে আড়ষ্টকর পাকে জড়িত। নিজের শ্রেষ্ঠতার দ্বারাই অন্যের শ্রেষ্ঠতাকে আমরা জাগাতে পারি, তাতেই মঙ্গল আমাদের ও অন্যের। দুর্বলের প্রার্থনা যে কুণ্ঠাগ্রস্ত দান সঞ্চয় করে সে দান শতছিদ্র ঘটের জল, যে আশ্রয় পায় চোরাবালিতে সে আশ্রয়ের ভিত্তি।

হে বিধাতা, দাও দাও
মোদের গৌরব দাও
দুঃসাধ্যের নিমন্ত্রণে
দুঃসহ দুঃখের গর্বে।
টেনে তোলো রসাক্ত ভাবের মোহ হতে
সবলে ধিক্কৃত করো দীনতার ধূলায় লুণ্ঠন।
দূর করো চিত্তের দাসত্ব বন্ধ,
ভাগ্যের নিয়ত অক্ষমতা,
দূর করো মূঢ়তায় অযোগ্যের পদে
মানবমর্যাদা-বিসর্জন,
চূর্ণ করো যুগে যুগে স্তূপীকৃত লজ্জারাশি
নিষ্ঠুর আঘাতে।
নিঃসঙ্কোচে
মস্তক তুলিতে দাও
অনন্ত আকাশে,
উদাত্ত আলোকে,
মুক্তির বাতাসে॥*

* Authorised English rendering of the address will be found in Appendix A.

The 5th March, 1938

Syamaprasad Mookerjee, Esq., M.A., B.L.,
Barrister-at-Law, M.L.A.,

Vice-Chancellor

YOUR EXCELLENCY, FELLOW-GRADUATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Twelve months have elapsed since the last Convocation and it is once again my privilege to extend to you all the good wishes of the University. To our new Chancellor we offer a hearty welcome and I venture to express the hope that the University will proceed further in its march toward progress and expansion, sustained by his sympathetic co-operation.

Last year the address to graduates was delivered in an unforgettable manner by Rabindra Nath Tagore. This year we have amidst us Rev. C. F. Andrews whose great sympathy with Indians and whose selfless devotion to all just and humane causes have won for him the respect and affection of men of all classes and creeds.

Before I make a rapid survey of some of our chief activities during the year, may I pay my tri-

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bute of respect to the memory of some distinguished persons whose death we have had to mourn since the last Convocation? Diverse were the fields of work of Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Dr. Heramba Chandra Maitra, Dr. Kasi Prasad Jayaswal, Dr. Syamadas Mookerjee, Dr. Indubhushan Brahmachari and Rev. Fr. F. X. Crohan. But each of them was actuated by the same spirit of devotion to duty and of service to the cause of India's uplift. Each contributed in his own way to her intellectual progress, believing firmly in the vigour and vitality of the youth of the land; and to their making they nobly and cheerfully dedicated their lives.

During the last twelve months the activities of the University have steadily increased and have kept its members busily engaged. We have to-day more than three thousand students studying directly under our control in the departments of Arts, Commerce, Science and Law, for whose benefit we maintain a staff of about 250 teachers in 36 different subjects. Forty research scholars are working in various branches of study in close co-operation with their professors. A desire for acquiring knowledge by their own unaided efforts is also more in evidence among students generally. The increased facilities given by the University Library have been eagerly availed of. The number of volumes issued to students during the year was one lac and thirty thousand, against only forty-six

thousand in 1935 and ninety-three thousand in 1936. The number of colleges has increased to 64 with an enrolment of nearly 33 thousand students. There are to-day more than 1,400 high schools with about three lacs and forty thousand boys and girls; and as many as 50,000 candidates sat for the last University examinations.

Five of our graduates were awarded the Doctor's degree and their theses covered subjects like Agricultural Economics, Metaphysics, History and Chemistry. Prizes and stipends were awarded for original contributions made by our advanced students in Arts, Science, Law, Medicine and Engineering. We have continued the policy of sending selected scholars abroad and the subjects for investigation included Education of the Blind, Banking and Currency Organisation, Standardisation of Drugs, Aromatic Chemicals, Plant Physiology and Physical Chemistry. We have not been forgetful of the need for organising courses of lectures by distinguished scholars, Indian and European. During the year we had amongst us Sir William Holdsworth speaking on English Law, Professor Fisher on Mathematical Statistics, Professor Myers on Industrial Psychology and Vocational Guidance, Professor Radhakrishnan on Comparative Religion, Mahamahopadhyay Pramathanath Tarkabhushan on Vaisnavism, Dr. Syud Hassan and Dr. Sudhindranath Ghosh of Geneva on European and Far-Eastern Problems, Dr. Ewart on Austrian

Culture, Sir Daniel Hamilton on India and the Empire, Dr. Dudley Stamp on Modern Geography, Dr. F. W. Thomas on the Literature of India and Greater India.

The Silver Jubilee Session of the Indian Science Congress held jointly with the British Association for the Advancement of Science, was another noteworthy event and we confidently expect that its deliberations will have a stimulating effect on the progress of scientific studies in India.

The University continues its task of publishing books, memoirs and journals chiefly contributed by our scholars. As many as twelve books on special subjects were brought out during the year. We also helped in the publication of nine journals, six of which were the organs of outside societies, for advanced studies in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Geography, Geology and Psychology.

Apart from the mere routine duties done, many of our teachers in the University and in the colleges have applied themselves to original work and inspired young scholars to follow in their lines, which have won for them recognition from various parts of India and abroad. Some of them have undertaken special topics for investigation at the instance of other bodies official and non-official, and are thus making a definite effort to give a wider public the benefit of their study and research. We are anxious that the departments of Science as also those of Economics and Commerce should be

brought into closer contact with practical problems of industry and trade affecting the interests of the province at large; and we are exploring the means for securing such co-operation.

The work of the Teachers' Training Department has considerably increased and the energy shown by the staff is commendable. During the year 530 teachers came from far and near for training. We have made special arrangements for Science and Geography and have also modified the Regulations, permitting *bona fide* teachers to appear at the B.T. Examination on well-defined conditions. I hope that in the near future it will be possible to increase the usefulness of this department so that an urgent educational need of the province may be adequately supplied.

We have revised the courses of study in several subjects in different Faculties so as to bring them into line with modern developments. The new Matriculation Regulations, which have just come into operation, have been criticised in some quarters as being too wide in the scope of the syllabuses. The University is fully conscious of the need for observing caution during the period of transition and is prepared to consider specific proposals for revision after the Regulations have had their trial for some time.

The scheme of expansion of women's education under the Viharilal Mitra Trust is now being prepared by an able Bengali lady graduate who was

deputed to visit educational centres in India and draw up a report. The University, I expect, will soon be in a position to formulate the lines of future activity in this field and carry out a programme of reform which will be of benefit to Bengal both socially and educationally.

The Art Museum which was opened last March is steadily growing into a useful institution. The collections amount to 1,228 and include valuable gifts from friends in and outside Bengal. Our aim is to lay special stress upon the forgotten treasures of Bengal and exploration of different regions in the province for collection of specimens has already been planned. With the permission of the Government of India and acting in close co-operation with the Archæological Department, we are just organising an excavation of the historic site of Bangarh in Dinajpur, directly undertaken by our staff and students.

The new scheme for creating an Appointments Board has been working for less than a year and we thankfully acknowledge the co-operation we have received from various commercial firms and organisations. The number of appointments till now has been about forty. Our main endeavour is to find out openings in such branches of trade and industry as do not at present attract qualified Bengali youths trained at the University. I do earnestly plead for support from all Chambers of Commerce and other bodies who are in a position to assist us.

A proposal now under consideration relates to the institution of a special course of training in agriculture and cottage industries. I hope this may help to turn the attention of our youths to practical pursuits and open a new source of productive energy which will be of benefit to themselves and to the province as a whole.

The attention paid by the University and its colleges to the health of the students continues unabated. The Rowing Club and the University Training Corps have improved in strength and efficiency. The Students' Welfare Department has extended its after-care work and proposes directly to influence some of the mofussil centres as well. Vigour and earnestness mark the work of other sports associations within the University and the colleges. The absence of adequate playing fields and also of a whole-time well-equipped staff for imparting physical instruction is, however, keenly felt. Much as I admire the keenness of a few select athletes and sportsmen, I would once again emphasise the imperative need for improving the health, vigour and vitality of all students and for turning the enthusiasm of thousands of mere student-spectators into active participation in games and physical exercises.

The University received during the year Rs. 1,39,460 as benefactions from private individuals. The thanks of the University have already been conveyed to the donors, but I should like to

express my gratitude to them once again, specially to Lady Abala Bose for her gift of a lac of rupees in memory of her husband, the late Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, and to Sir Praphulla Chandra Ray for his gift of Rs. 10,000 for research in Botany and Zoology.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the conditions of the Government grant have been revised and the University has been assured of a block grant of Rs. 4,85,000 a year. We hope the grant will be placed on a statutory basis as in the case of Dacca University. According to the present position, out of the total revenues of the University 69 per cent. come from fees, 12 per cent. from endowments and 19 per cent. from the public funds.

One of the important questions which the University has been called upon to consider relates to certain proposals for the establishment of a Board of Secondary Education in the province. The Senate rejected these proposals without a voice of dissent as in its opinion they were calculated to retard future progress. We feel glad at being assured that the draft scheme was a tentative one and did not represent the settled views of the Provincial Government. I do not propose to go into the details of this question here as at the invitation of the Minister of Education the University is at present engaged in a Conference with Government. I sincerely hope that the great problem of the future

re-organisation of Secondary Education will be solved to the satisfaction of men of all shades of public opinion and will help to usher in a new era of unfettered progress.

Stagnation is one of the dangers which threatens a public institution such as ours, over-burdened with numerous problems of administration, not all of which are easy of solution. The rapid survey which I have placed before you will, I hope, convince you that we have not been oblivious of this danger. However important and fundamental the changes which we have recently introduced in various parts of our University organism, the time has now definitely come when we have to probe deeper into our educational system as a whole and strive strenuously for improvement. Public opinion in this province will not for a moment tolerate any proposals which under the cloak of reform may aim at restriction of facilities. We want more education and better education, and any reformer who can satisfy us in this respect will find enthusiastic support from all. While on the one hand we have to guard against the dominance of vested interests, we must also recognise that existing institutions which have worked for the advancement of education under tremendous difficulties, cannot be deleted by a stroke of the pen. True statesmanship must discover a satisfactory way of re-adjusting and utilising all existing resources, both in man-power and in materials, and evolve a new system of

education capable of complete fulfilment before long.

University education originated in this country not in the desire for the conservation and betterment of our traditional culture, our arts, crafts and industries, but mainly for imparting to us Western ideas through the medium of a foreign tongue. It has had no doubt its beneficent results. It has produced a large number of scholars and helped in the creation of a new literature and the development of science. Professions like Law, Medicine and Engineering have rapidly grown as part of this programme and absorbed some of the best Indian talents. But in the main, it has merely ensured a regular supply of an indigenous machinery for the smooth working of a powerful bureaucracy. It did not aim at educating the people at large. The masses remained untouched. No attempt was made to correlate the different stages of education—the Primary, the Secondary and the University—so as to build them up into a harmonious whole. Too often these stages have been regarded as separate, water-tight compartments, and we hear of projects for improving one at the expense of another. We hear to-day of restriction of University education, of reducing its sphere of influence, of making examinations its chief function and thrusting it into the background for the sake of encouraging Primary Education. Nothing could be more disastrous than such a short-sighted policy.

We, on the other hand, want to see established a sound policy of national education, which will ensure a steady advance from the lowest stage to the highest. We want to see Primary Education developing widely and laying the foundations of literacy, of right conduct, of healthy activities and of a breadth of outlook which will render possible the growth of a national consciousness. We want to see Secondary Education spreading far and wide, satisfying the requirements of a sound and liberal education and leading its recipients to diverse fields of intellectual, useful and productive activity. Then, in the last stage, we want to see University education as a natural continuation of such a varied type of Secondary Education, providing for higher and advanced work, not only in the liberal and professional studies but also in Science and Technology, in Commerce and Agriculture. We want to see the syllabuses and courses of studies so remodelled, systems of training and examination so re-organised that the young learner may grow up not as a mechanised recorder of information and theories, not as a dry specialist, but as one whose latent power is well roused, whose critical judgment is strengthened and whose capacity for wide thinking and application of knowledge to problems of life is developed to the fullest extent. We want to see such an education being imparted through the language of the province in all stages, without neglecting a study of the English language. We want to see

the amplest provisions made for the supply of teachers ready to dedicate their lives to the cause of upbringing of the youth of the country, comprising both leaders and followers, healthy in body and intellect, disciplined and open-minded, generous and upright, fearless and patriotic. We want to see such a wide and beneficent policy of education, receiving unstinted aid from the State and from the public, and freed from the baneful influence of party politics and communal wrangles. We want to see the adoption of a State policy which will make possible a wide absorption of educated youths, now and in future, in the work of rebuilding Bengal in all its phases, social, economic and political.

Through education, more than through anything else, we can attain these our cherished hopes and aspirations, and let us stand united to serve its sacred cause. I hope and pray that in the years to come it may be given to us all, in whose hands rest responsible powers, to leave aside disputes and differences, to put our shoulder to the wheel of progress and to help in inaugurating an era of constructive work which will make our great province a happier place to live in and will give it a position of supremacy in matters concerning India as a whole. I hope and pray that in this task of reconstruction touching upon every phase of our national life, the University of Calcutta may play its part with courage, wisdom and foresight, and inspire in the

hearts of thousands of her sons and daughters an abiding sense of loyalty and affection which will sustain her in her days of trial and of triumph and lead her on from strength to strength towards the fulfilment of her destiny.

The 5th March, 1938

Reverend Charles Freer Andrews

CHANCELLOR, VICE-CHANCELLOR AND FRIENDS,

You will pardon me to-day if I speak chiefly to those who are students; for my whole life has been spent in the student world, among the young, and I have a deep love for them which seeks to find its utterance at a time like this in the hope that some word of mine may cling to their memories long after Convocation Day is over. For the same reason, also, what I write will be direct and simple. Need I add that this deep love for Bengal and its students had its origin in my own revered teacher, Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore? Never has any one had such a friend and guide as he has been to me!

So let me take, as my main theme, the phrase that Professor Whitehead has set in the forefront of his book, called *Science and the Modern World.* He has dedicated it thus : "*To my colleagues, past and present, whose friendship is inspiration.*"

"Whose friendship is inspiration!" It is concerning the transforming power of friendship,

between teacher and taught, and also between students themselves, that I wish to speak. For that 'friendship' as Whitehead rightly says, 'is inspiration.'

Let me venture to show you out of my own lifelong personal experience, both as a student and as a teacher, the supreme truth of those words—how the very best scientific and literary work requires this background of friendship for its highest fulfilment; how the student, or the teacher, who has never made a friend, has lost the one pearl of great price which the University has to offer: how the basis of all sound learning in human affairs is laid in fellowship and friendship.

When I look back on my own undergraduate days at Pembroke College, Cambridge, the one permanent and abiding thing that made all the difference to me, was the profound reverence I had for my Tutor, Charles Hermann Prior. He let me enter into his own inner life and shared his deepest thoughts with me. His friendship was my inspiration. He was one of those pure in heart who see God: and so he taught me not only the Hebrew of the Bible, but also to look steadily into that unseen world where his own mind had found its rest.

Along with him, was one who became our President, Sir George Gabriel Stokes, the greatest man of science in his own generation, whom men like Lord Kelvin used to call their Master. He was completely unselfish, and would give to his pupils

freely his own most fruitful thoughts, in order that they might get the world's praise rather than himself. The undergraduates used to call him "the Angel Gabriel," because in his old age his face was almost heavenly to look at. He was so accessible that even when he was long past eighty, he would welcome me into his own home, and encourage me to come and sit with him in order to learn something of his spirit.

Then, last of all, there was Edward Granville Browne—'Persian Browne,' we used to call him —who at that time had just become world-famous in literary circles through his book, *A Year among the Persians*. So brilliant was he as a linguist that I have heard him carry on four conversations at once at the High Table in four different languages with perfect ease and without a pause for a word. His room in College, in the Ivy Court, used to be our *rendezvous*, late into the night, while he told us about the East. The debt I owe to his friendship can never be repaid. He turned my face towards India and made the Eastern world a living reality to me. No one in Cambridge understood the Spirit of Islam as he did. The admiration, at its highest point, that I have always retained for the Muslim Faith, had its early beginning in my friendship with this profound Arabic and Persian scholar.

So I could go on, one by one, to describe my teachers. They were not merely known to us in the

lecture theatre. They lived with us and shared our lives. What, in ancient India, I have read concerning the great teachers of those early days in the forest *asrams*, was true in its own degree of these teachers of ours at Cambridge. Their friendship was our own inspiration.

May I dare to tell one other story—not of a teacher this time, but of a fellow student. Basil Westcott, the youngest brother of Bishop Westcott of Calcutta, and the son of old Bishop Westcott of Durham, was my dearest college friend. He was at Trinity and I was at Pembroke : but we lived in each other's rooms and used to have our meals together and thus met every day. This one friendship with Basil Westcott meant most of all to me in College days. We shared our thoughts and aspirations ; we talked over together our life purposes, and were one in mind and heart.

When Basil Westcott had taken his degree, he went out to St. Stephen's College, Delhi, as a teacher, and while he was there he became the closest friend of Susil Kumar Rudra, who was then Vice-Principal. Basil used to write to me every week about the College, and in this way I first got to know his friend Susil. Then he himself died a very noble death ; for while he was nursing a sick patient he caught the dread infection of cholera, and thus passed away. The whole student world of Delhi mourned his loss.

As soon as the news came of Basil's death, I knew that the call had come at last to go out to India in order to take his place. Susil Rudra welcomed me at once as the friend of his own friend, and thus we were brought close to one another from the very start. When later, as the years went on, our mutual affection grew deeper, I caught from Susil the flame of his own burning love for his mother country, India. For love of country was the deepest passion of his life.

Susil had received his education and taken a high degree at Calcutta University late in the seventies of last century. He was much older than I was, and I held him in the highest regard for his sheer goodness. He told me how at one time, in his undergraduate days, he had nearly lost his faith and thrown over religion altogether; but Father Brown, of the Oxford Mission, in Cornwallis Street, had wonderfully befriended him and had saved him from such a great disaster. The daily life of prayer, which the Oxford Brothers led, had restored his own firm belief in God, and this bedrock faith had gradually become the deepest thing in all his life. It had kept his heart and soul pure as nothing else could do.

There was a quiet dignity about Susil Rudra which never left him for a moment. It gained for him in Delhi the playful name of the 'Burra Sahib': but a gentler, humbler, kinder soul never existed. He was my own Principal for nearly ten

years, and it was a supreme joy to me to work under him. Then, at last, in 1913, he gave me up, without a single word of rebuke or hesitation, so that I might go to Santiniketan, which has been my loved home ever since. How can I possibly tell all that I have learnt there under our Gurudeva!

Let me go back once more to make my meaning clear. If this priceless boon of friendship had not been so bountifully given me in my own early College days, if I had not then learnt what may be truly called the art of friendship, I should never have been able to make friends so easily in Santiniketan itself when I went there from the Punjab. One step led on to another.

What I actually found at Santiniketan when I lived there was the old Cambridge atmosphere all over again—that close touch between the teachers and the students, those small groups and friendships formed between the students themselves, which is the noblest avenue of learning. Above all, we had in our Gurudeva an ideal teacher, whom we all could love and reverence. Thus we had our own education set in perfect surroundings. Both the teachers and the students lived together and learnt together. Friendship, to quote Dr. Whitehead once more, was inspiration.

The question now arises—and I confess at once it is very difficult to answer: Can these ideal conditions still continue between pupil and teachers, and also among fellow students, in a vast

modern city such as Calcutta, where simple friendly intercourse is hampered and restricted on every side by the crowd?

I would answer tentatively that it is still possible in rare cases, even here in crowded Calcutta; for I have actually seen it, in one instance at least, in the very place where we are gathered to-day; and I would like to bear witness to what I saw.

During the Flood Relief of North Bengal, many years ago, I used to come, very early in the morning, by train from Bolpur in order to take instructions from Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray who along with Satis Chandra Das Gupta was in charge of the flood relief operations. I would then go on from him to Sealdah Station. It was easy for me to notice on these occasions, how, in his own Science Buildings, he used to live the life of a true scholar such as India knew and loved of old. For he was clearly in every way the friend of his pupils, sharing with them everything he had, including his own expert scientific knowledge. He would give them all the credit. It reminded me of Sir George Gabriel Stokes at Cambridge over again. His students were his friends, and he was their *guru*: and if the noble word of my own scripture is true—"Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends"—then it was true of him: for he was literally ready to lay down even life itself for those who were his pupils and whom he called his friends.

Again and again, I used to meet him during those days whenever I went to the flooded areas at Santahar, Potisar and Atrai, and what I saw of him was always the same. He lived a life of great austerity and sacrificed all for the great work he had undertaken, building up the science side of the University in that important area of practical Chemistry which had been entrusted to him. No wonder the students themselves flocked to him in order to undertake the work of relief of human suffering in North Bengal, when he himself gave them the stirring call. For they knew that there was nothing which he would invite them to undertake that he was not ready first of all to do himself.

I have taken this example, because it is still living and fresh within my own memory, and it came directly into my own life experience. It showed to me how the very greatest difficulties of a modern city life, like that of Calcutta, could be overcome, if only the human spirit were wholly dedicated to the task.

At this point, I would also record my strong conviction that Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, one of the outstanding Vice-Chancellors of recent times, had the genius to see that in the higher branches of research these ideal conditions between teachers and taught could be repeated in this University, at least among the most brilliant students. For he determined to make Calcutta not merely an examining centre, where thousands of students should sit for

examinations, but a teaching University, where studies might be carried on in the higher branches of learning. In this way, it would prove a benefit, not only to India, but to all mankind. With such an object in view, one after the other, new Chairs were founded and lecturers appointed in subjects which should keep India in close touch with the most advanced thought of the day. Here, the classes were necessarily small, and the contact with advanced students thus became happily all the more close. The task of providing funds for this great enterprise was colossal and none but a giant in strength and determination would have attempted it : but his own generosity stimulated others and in this manner very notable additions to the higher life of the University were brought about by his magnificent effort.

Here, also, under Sir Asutosh's wise direction, in the conduct of this higher research work, whether in literature, philosophy, or science, Calcutta University has refused to be provincial. It has chosen its teachers from every part of India, and also from other lands : for human knowledge knows no local boundaries. The word 'University' itself implies this, and so now you are rightly proud to have had here on your staff not merely scholars from your own country of highest repute, but also such brilliant men as the Nobel Prize Winner, Prof. C. V. Raman, and the Oxford Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics, Professor Radhakrishnan, both of

whom have been invited to come to Calcutta from the South. Indeed, more and more it may truly be said, that although this city has ceased to be the political capital of India, it remains, and is likely to remain, for generations to come, the intellectual capital and centre of the whole country. That, after all, is the greatest distinction which can be given to Bengal—to be the beacon light of learning to the whole Eastern world.

Let me give you one further piece of news which shows how knowledge is universal and overleaps all boundaries. A little more than a year ago, I was in Australia, and pleaded with some success before the Vice-Chancellor and Senate of Sydney University that their rapidly rising School of Oriental Studies should have its own close contact with India as well as with China and Japan; and now I have a good hope that this will shortly come to pass. Furthermore, in Czechoslovakia, steps have quite recently been taken to institute a lectureship in the Bengali Language at Prague, which is one of the most ancient seats of learning in Central Europe. A Bengali from Calcutta University has already been appointed.

This leads me on directly to another aspect of your University life, about which I would wish to offer you my warmest congratulations. For you are, I believe, the first University in British India to break through the unwholesome tradition of making a foreign language the medium of instruction

instead of the mother tongue. You have brought back your own beautiful language into its true and rightful place. Indeed, I acknowledge with a certain sense of shame your own kindly indulgence towards me in allowing me to use my own English to-day as the medium of this address, while only last year the precedent was established whereby the Poet, our Gurudeva, gave to you in his own matchless Bengali the thoughts he had to offer. In my own case, if I must confess it, the simple truth is this, that like most Englishmen I am very bad at languages and came so late to Bengal that I found myself too old to learn. Also my whole life since then has been far too fully occupied to enable me to sit down quietly and learn both to speak and read Bengali as I ought to have done.

But while I have been discussing these things which are so close to my own heart, I have not forgotten for a moment the great bulk of the students of the University who are unable to go on up to the standard of research work in the higher branches of study, but have to leave the University in order to gain a livelihood at a comparatively early age. How are *they* to get something at least of that ideal relationship with their teachers and fellow-students about which I have spoken? Crowded as the Colleges are in the very centre of this great city, with noisy traffic around them all day long, with teachers who live at a distance and come in each day for their work and go out again when it is over—how. under

these conditions, can you really expect to obtain the best that a University is able to offer?

Frankly, it is well-nigh impossible except under rare conditions such as I have already mentioned. One consideration has often weighed with me as it has no doubt weighed with you also. I have wondered whether you have not got to be far-sighted enough, while there is yet time, to move some at least of your residential Colleges out to the suburban area of Calcutta, into less crowded quarters; whether you may not use the modern conveniences of rapid transport in order to get over a part of the supreme difficulty of these vast numbers of city students.

The Christian College, Madras, which Dr. Miller founded, has recently made the plunge and moved outside Madras. This has already met, so I hear, with success. Those who know Thambaram, where the new College has been built, speak about it as a great improvement on the old site in the centre of the City. Motor transport has solved the problem over there. Might it not solve a part of the problem here? At least with some Colleges the experiment might be well worth trying.

Yet, while offering this suggestion, I freely acknowledge that the question of congestion in a huge city is much more difficult to solve in Calcutta than in Madras. For the population and crowded area are both vaster. Indeed, it may well be found that just as in the case of New York, Tokyo, or

London, a University with Colleges at the centre of the city is inevitable owing to the peculiar character of our modern civilisation.

Taking, therefore, things as we find them—Colleges overcrowded, staffs overworked, boarding houses overflowing—what can be done to prevent mere mass production of University degrees?

Every member of the Senate of this University must have been troubled, as I have been, by this problem. The Education Commissions have not solved it. How can we best face this acknowledged evil?

There is one principle, which may guide our thoughts, because its psychology has been thoroughly tested by experiment and proved scientifically sound. It is this, that the *small* group enables the average man to make his own highest effort at intellectual attainment far better than the large group. For the crowded lecture hall is apt to leave the ordinary student unintelligently passive. He soaks in information like a sponge. He does not "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" his knowledge. He swallows it whole. This very simple, but profound lesson which modern psychology has taught us, is now gradually becoming recognised all over the world. When I was lecturing in Cambridge a year ago I found out that all the changes of recent years had been made in this direction. The tutorial system had been fully accepted as sound and it is now in full swing. For it had been scientifically

and even mathematically established. Even the number of the small group has been worked out. Aldous Huxley, in his latest book, called *Ends and Means*, has given a whole chapter to this subject. "A crowd," he says, "is a lot of people: a group is a few. A crowd has a mental life inferior in intellectual quality and emotionally less under control than the mental life of each of its members in isolation. The mental life of a group is not inferior either intellectually or emotionally to the mental life of the individuals composing it, and may in favourable circumstances actually be superior."

Here then is a psychological principle which may help Calcutta University. The crowded class room is sub-personal, sub-human, herd-like. It does not carry men forward into that sphere of 'plain living and high thinking' which alone can produce the scholar, the artist, the thinker, and the man of affairs.

As a teacher, therefore, I would venture to appeal to my fellow teachers who are present: Can we so decentralise our work, in different subjects, as to produce in our student world the high psychology of the group rather than the low psychology of the crowd? Can we so arrange our work as to appeal to the individual, the particular, the personal, in our students rather than deal with them merely in the mass? To touch politics for one moment, here surely is the *vital* difference to-day between the liberal and democratic mind on the one hand

and the authoritarian standards which dictators impose on the other.

If, as teachers, we are determined to carry out this high principle of the group rather than the low principle of the crowd, it will mean undoubtedly more giving out of ourselves to our pupils; it will involve our being much more accessible to them. We shall not grudge the hours spent in personal talks; and interviews will never be formal. We shall seek to split up our classes and supervise personal work done by the pupil himself rather than aim at disciplining a vast crowd of students into a forced attention. In all this, we shall come back much nearer to the true personal relation of the *guru* and the *chela*, and be much less of a drill-master and an autocrat.

One last word to the students who are present to-day. There are voices abroad, both in the East and in the West, proclaiming to the modern world, that the pathway of freedom lies in discarding all outworn inhibitions and aiming only at what is wrongly called 'self-expression.' Self-expression, in the highest sense of the word, is the one goal of Education: it is the one aim of every creative worker. But this result can only be obtained by arduous endeavour. For the perfect mastery which it brings is the final achievement: it can only be attained by scorning delights and living laborious days. Tagore's perfect freedom in lyrical utterance, Nandalal Bose's mastery in the realm of art,

these have come out of a lifetime of genius and effort combined.

When, on the other hand, the phrase ' self-expression ' is wrongly used to denote giving way to every wayward passion and yielding to every whim of our lower nature—the end of *this* is slavery, not freedom : it leads, not to mastery, but to defeat. The friendship, which is inspiration, will always hold the student up, not drag him down. It will help to keep his deals true and high.

One of the wisest words that the East ever uttered has been translated into perfect English thus :

" Keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right ; for that shall bring a man peace at the last."

And your own poet, in no less perfect English, has given us the immortal prayer :

" Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.

" I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind.

" I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower, knowing that thou hast thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart.

" And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions, knowing it is thy power that gives me strength to act."

The 5th March, 1938

His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir Michael Herbert Rudolph Knatchbull Baron Brabourne, M.C., G.C.S.I,, G.C.I.E., J.P.

Chancellor

At the conlcusion of the Address of Reverend Charles Freer Andrews

His Excellency thanked the Vice-Chancellor most sincerely for the hearty welcome he had extended to him on the occasion of his first official visit to the University in connection with its annual Convocation. His Excellency, who deemed his connection with this University a great honour, expressed the hope that during his term of office much would be added to the " extremely impressive catalogue of achievements " of the University which the Vice-Chancellor had narrated and that during this period the University would go from strength to strength and achieve further triumphs as time went on.

On behalf of the University and every alumnus His Excellency thanked the Rev. Mr. Andrews for his inspiring address. " Those of us who have the privilege of knowing the Rev. Mr. Andrews," remarked His Excellency, " realise how very typical

of the man is the address. We know what a tremendous love of his fellow-beings has always actuated Mr. Andrews. I hope his address will reach a wider audience than the one assembled here."

"The key-note of his address was friendship—the friendship between teachers and students. But let us try to take this friendship a little further. Wherever you look in the world to-day you find suspicion. Look East or look West and you find the same thing—suspicion between nations and even between people of the same nation. If only a little more friendship could be taught to the nations of the world, this cloud of suspicion would soon vanish and, in a very short time, many of the grave problems which we are facing to-day throughout the world, will disappear."

Addressing the students His Excellency said: "Young men and young women who stand at the threshold of your careers to-day, you take with you the very best wishes of every single one of us who has travelled some little way down that road. We all realise that many of you have hard struggles ahead. Remember when you go out into the world that you are equipped in a way which is denied to millions of your fellow countrymen. Make service the key-note of your life, avail yourselves of every opportunity to help your more unfortunate fellow-beings. Remember that the opportunity to do this is one of the priceless things which your University training has given you."

APPENDIX A

CONVOCATION ADDRESS*

BY

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

When I was invited to address the students at this Convocation of Calcutta University, the infirmity of my worn-out body stood in the way, but the special significance of to-day's function, overriding all difficulties, has irresistibly drawn me to accept the proud privilege offered to me. For this is the first time that the Premier University of Bengal has given the seat of honour to the Bengali language in the ceremony of its bestowal of academic distinctions, hitherto marred by the ill-omen of the vacancy left by its absence.

One of the most poignant signs of the days of a people's adversity is that even truisms require to be aggressively proclaimed. Wherefore it has been necessary, through long years, to labour the point that learning loses its vitamines if strained through a foreign language.

In no country in the world, except India, is to be seen this divorce of the language of instruction

* Authorised English rendering of the Convocation Address delivered in Bengali on February 17, 1937.

from the language of the pupil. Full hundred years have not elapsed since Japan took its initiation into Western culture. At the outset she had to take recourse to text-books written in foreign languages, but from the very first, her objective had been to arrive at the stage of ranging freely over the subjects of study in the language of the country. It was because Japan had recognised the need of such studies, not as an ornament for a select section of her citizens, but for giving power and culture to all of them, that she deemed it to be of prime importance to make them universally available to her people. And in this effort of Japan to gain proficiency in the Western arts and sciences, which were to give her the means of self-defence against the predatory cupidity of foreign powers, to qualify her to take an honoured place in the comity of nations, no trouble or expense was spared, least of all was there the miserly folly of keeping such learning out of easy reach, within the confines of a foreign language.

We had allowed ourselves too complaisantly to become reconciled to be thus slighted by the dispensers of our fate, to acquiesce in this belittling of the masses of our people, consoled by the scanty helps of learning parsimoniously served to the few occupying the front seats, which they called "educating the people of India." We had lost the courage even to imagine a broader system of education venturing beyond the bounds of such triviality, just as the Bedouin cannot dream that Providence will

ever allow him to share in the expansive fruitfulness outside the few scattered oases of his desert homeland.

The difference between the uneducated and the educated section of our countrymen is exactly like that between the Sahara and the tiny oases that dot its vast expanse—both in quantity and in quality. For this reason, though we are under one political domination, we are not governed by the same mentality. Of late in Japan, Persia, Arabia, Turkey, everywhere amongst Eastern peoples, measures have been taken to get rid of this internal source of division leading to futility of national aspiration—everywhere, save in this unfortunate land.

We know of parasitic creatures in the animal world, that live and die in utter dependence on their hosts. They are able to eke out a living, but are forever crippled in the growth of their limbs and organs. Such has been the case with our modern school and college education. It has from its inception been parasitic on a foreign tongue, so that, though nourishment has not been altogether lacking, it has been obtained at the cost of all-round development—so much so, that it has even ceased to be sensible of its own abortiveness. Accustomed to live by borrowing, it has come to measure attainment by largeness of debt: it has signed a bond of servitude to the thinkers of other lands. Those who receive such education cannot produce what they

consume. Brought up to absorb the thoughts of others, their academic success depends on their ability to repeat by rote, and their own faculty of thought, their courage of conviction, their creative inspiration, have all been enfeebled. It goes without saying that the only way of revival from such chronic debility is by the assimilation and application of the subject-matter of education through one's own language, just as, in order to incorporate food-stuffs into the body, they have to be chewed with one's own teeth, saturated with one's own digestive juices.

Of course it will not do to forget that the English language cannot lose a place of honour in Indian universities, not merely because of its practical usefulness as a means of livelihood, but because it is the vehicle of the Western science which to-day has earned the respect of all the world. To repudiate it out of a sense of false patriotism would only be to curtail our own opportunities. This science is not only important in the field of world economics and politics as a means of self-preservation, but its influence is of immense value for freeing the mind from the inertia of stupidity. The mind which refuses to admit its message, which is unable to accept its implications, needs must be content with a narrow, dark and puny life. From whatever horizon the light of knowledge may radiate, it is only a clouded, barbaric mind that rejects it because of its unfamiliarity. All races and peoples are

equally entitled to avail themselves of Truth in any of its manifestations, for this is a right inherent in humanity itself.

Men are inevitably separate in regard to their share of political or economic wealth, but in the case of bestowal of the largesse of mind, all men who come to receive, have everywhere and always been accorded equal opportunity—the giver being rewarded by the generosity of his giving, the receiver glorying in his own competence to take. In all countries, the doors of the storehouse of material wealth are strongly guarded, while the university gates are ever wide open. The Goddess of Riches is careful, because her accumulations are limited by quantity, they are lost when spent; and the Goddess of Learning is lavish, because her wealth does not depend on accumulation, but grows as it overflows.

I venture to think that it is a matter of special pride for Bengal that she did not delay in claiming her share of European culture, by contact with which she hastened the growth and enrichment of her own language and literature, and which by its very influence enabled her to overcome the initial weakness of a tendency to imitation. In the first stages, those who were reputed to be learned, exclusively used the English language in speech and writing, for through it their new wealth of thought and feeling had been chiefly gained; nevertheless those of them who were literary men soon came to

perceive that while they could work by the candle-light of a foreign language, they could not awaken to true self-expression except in the morning light of their own language. We have two outstanding examples of this, in Michael Dutt and Bankim Chatterjee.

Michael's acquaintance with English language and literature was as wide as his love for them was deep, and he had moreover wandered into the realm of Greek and Latin classics and had tasted of their nectar. So his genius naturally first sought to express itself in English. But it did not take him long to realse that the heavy loss in interest, entailed by reliance on borrowed material, left but little of residual value, whereupon he made his first salutation to his mother tongue with an epic poem, in the language of which there was nothing of the faltering hesitations of a neophyte. True, its outward form followed a foreign model, but its conceits and imageries were of the indigenous *Krittibas* pattern, with which hospitality was shown to the genius of Milton and Homer. There is no ingloriousness in offering such hospitality, rather, that betokens wealth and also helps to augment it.

What Michael did for Bengali poetry, Bankimchandra did for Bengali prose—he cleared the way for its advance. Bankim was one of the foremost of the first batch of students of Calcutta University, and it need hardly be added that his mind had thrived and grown on English learning. His first

literary enterprise was a story in English under the influence of English fiction, only to make him discover, soon enough, the futility of such attempts. The very culture he had imbibed, because it had been assimilated, drew him to seek its fulfilment in his own language. As, when the waterfall from the distant mountain top pursues its way through the populous valley, it makes fruitful the fields alongside by causing the seeds within them to grow, so Bankim utilised the foreign stream of thought to fertilise the mental soil of his country through his own mother-tongue.

Before the time of Bankim-chandra, the educated section of our countrymen had come to the conclusion that their own enjoyment of beauty and quest of truth could not be carried on except in the fields of European literature, while the Bengali language, with its comparative poverty, was fit only to act as nurse to those of little learning. But Bankim's endeavour in his *Bangadarshan* was to make available the power of full-fledged English lore, by giving it Bengali form. It was in the genius of these heralds of the new age, that the fruits of European culture, with all the possibilities of their future ripening, were first manifest, not as exotics demanding a price, but as a crop raised in the country, adding to its wealth. What if the seeds came from foreign parts, did they not fall and sprout on our own soil? That which can grow and flourish in the country no longer remains foreign: in many

a flower and fruit of our land are there evidences of this truth.

The significance of the new knowledge learnt through the English language has found its way into every Bengali home, having taken on a Bengali body in our own literature. We now hopefully await its arrival on the same intimate terms, within the halls of this University. And I am here to-day to bring a message of joy and pride from our country-men, to give voice to their hope that this University of Bengal will find its true glory in gaining intimacy with the people of its province through their natural language.

But for this, I had not the wherewithal to pay the price of my entry here. The short period of my early schooling was spent on the lowest floor of our educational tower. Later, in my first youth, I ventured shrinkingly, at the behest of my elders, to enter for a day the First-year Class of the Presidency College, as a casual student. That day was never followed by a second. There must have been something excessively incongruous in my looks and demeanour with that of the regular students, for I was greeted with a gust of suppressed laughter which made me acutely feel the misfit. The next day I failed to muster up the courage to face a repetition of this ordeal, nor did I dare to imagine that I would ever again be called upon to cross the threshold of the University, to take a seat beside its qualified inmates. By virtue, however, of the merit acquired

by the service of my mother-tongue, such undreamt of privilege has at length fallen to my lot.

We cannot but admit that the present age is dominated by the civilisation of Europe. This age has presented a background of strenuous endeavour to all the world, on which the thoughts and deeds of men are appearing in ever-new variety of form, and are spreading as a unifying influence over the whole of the civilised world. It would not have been possible for the science and literature, the history, economics and politics, the technique of research and of the testing of truth, born on the soil of Europe, thus to permeate the world, had they not stood the test of experimental application, had the mind of Europe not won universal recognition by reason of the honesty and earnestness of its striving, impelling all the newly awakened countries to adopt the same studies, the same methods, the same attitude of mind.

Now almost everywhere, schools and colleges and universities are looked upon as means of irrigating the mass mind and sowing it with the seeds of the new knowledge. I have seen for myself a country that has displayed an amazing power of removing the stupendous obstacle of illiteracy, massed up during ages of neglect, within a short space of time, with the result that its down-trodden proletariat, reduced to the verge of the extinction of their humanity within the dumb darkness of lack of self-expression, now stand forth in the forefront

of go-ahead nations by the exercise of their liberated powers.

But, all this while, our universities—poorly equipped, scantily respected, lacking encouragement —have been plying monotonously like little ferry boats, carrying their handful of students over the meagre subjects set for their examinations. These universities of ours have touched no more than the outermost fringe of the great mass mind, and even that contact is of the lightest, bereft as it is of all vitality in passing through its foreign covering. Wherefore, far behind the other Eastern nations in which the call to awake has been heard, lags India in regard to self-respect awakened in the light of self-knowledge.

On behalf of writers in Bengali, and for myself, I would claim that we have been engaged in the work of implanting modern culture in the heart of our country. This spontaneous activity of ours has long been ignored by our University, which never invited its co-operation, for it used to look down on our work as something different in kind from its own. The gulf between the two was first bridged by Sir Asutosh when he made bold to bestow a Doctorate on this humble writer in Bengali.

Great was the daring required to do this, for the exclusiveness of the artificial aristocracy of English learning had become a deep-rooted tradition. But valiant Sir Asutosh felt no qualms in delivering such blow

against this aristocratic pride entrenched in a foreign language. He first sent this friendly greeting to his mother-tongue from the top of the University tower, and then followed it up, with cautious skill, by carving a channel below, through which the Bengali language could flow into its precincts. That channel has now been widened by his worthy son and successor, for which our present Vice-Chancellor deserves the blessings of his motherland.

For me, a writer in the vernacular, unpurified by the university rites of initiation, Sir Asutosh first broke one of its unwritten laws; and one more knot of their bonds has now been cut by his son in inviting me, that same academic outcaste, to address you in our own language. This shows that a veritable change of climate has come over our educational world in Bengal, and the dry branch that had withered at the wintry touch of Western influence, is now festively putting forth fresh foliage.

Elsewhere in India, another University has recently been seen to make the attempt to use as its medium of instruction the language, if not of the people as a whole, at least of a considerable section of them, and its authorities have already achieved a marvellous success. This unexpected fulfilment of such hitherto unheard of idea, is doubtless for them a thing to glory in. But the present ambition of Calcutta University has for its larger objective the whole of its countrymen. Though some of the limbs of our Bengali-speaking province have been

cut asunder by the hatchet of its rulers, this gesture of our University still amounts to proclaiming its recognition of the language of 50 millions as its own.

By thus honouring its own country this University stands honoured. And to the memory of the great Sir Asutosh, who heralded the advent of this auspicious day, I offer on behalf of us all our respectful salutation.

I am aware that latterly a bitter protest has gone forth from the Eastern world against the claim to greatness of European civilisation and culture. It is doubtless advancing at a great rate in the accumulation of material wealth,—but the greatness of man is not in his outward possessions. The greed, rapacity and political trickery that emanate from the Western powers ruthlessly to trample underfoot the rights of weaker countries, have never before in the history of man been seen in such fearsome shape. Man has never been able in the past to give his unbridled passions such monstrous proportions, such skilful, undefeatable efficiency. That has become possible for the West to-day because of its command of science.

When in the begining or middle of the Nineteenth Century we made our first acquaintance with European civilisation, our joy and admiration freely went out to it in the belief that it had come into the world animated with a genuine respect for man as man; we felt certain that truth, devotion, justice, and goodwill towards men were its essential charac-

teristics; we thought that it had taken on itself the duty of freeing mankind from every kind of external and internal bondage. But as the years went by, within the short span of our own life-time, we have seen this love of humanity, this sense of justice, getting feebler and feebler, till at last there is left no civilised Court of Appeal where the plaint of the persecuted against the powerful oppressor has any chance of being heard on the ground of righteousness.

The once-famous sponsors of the civilisation are now devoting all their intellect and wealth to produce inhuman engines of destruction to rend and maim one another. Such mutual mistrust, such mortal terror, between man and man, no other age has ever witnessed. The firmament above man's work-a-day world from which comes his light, through which is heard his call to liberation, is now murky with the dust raised by continual conflict thick with the germs of moral death.

The grand old civilisations of old, of which we have still preserved the memory, strove with all their powers to keep this higher region clear and undefiled, its pure light unobstructed. Such endeavour is now-a-days scoffed at by the modern unbelievers in eternal Truth and Right. Such objective is deemed utterly unworthy of the uppermost exploiting nations who plume themselves on being predestined by nature cruelly to overwhelm the earth with their domination. The whole Western continent trembles under the mad war-dance of their

civilisation, now intoxicated with insatiable greed. With what face, then, am I to expatiate on the merits of the culture in which the expedient is thus divorced from the good, of the civilisation which is thus staggering, bemused, towards its own destruction?

But in the history and literature of this same civilisation, have we not, one day, seen its true love for man? What if it is now mocking its own higher self?—I cannot dismiss the signs we have seen of its greatness of heart, as an illusory mirage: I will not say that the brilliance of its spirit is false, and that it is the darkness of its debasement which is true. Civilisation has, on many an occasion, taken wrong steps, proved untrue to itself, repudiated its own supreme gift to humanity. We have beheld the same unfortunate lapses in our own country as well as outside it. In every chapter of history the glory of humanity has had its fall. But whenever some invaluable truth has found expression in any shape or form, it has won the allegiance of mankind, even when standing on the rubbish heaps of its decayed outward magnificence.

Europe has provided the world with the gifts of a great culture—had it not the power to do so, it would never have attained its supremacy. It has given the example of dauntless courage, ungrudging self-sacrifice, it has shown tireless energy in the acquisition and spread of knowledge, in the making of institutions for human welfare. Even in these

days of its self-abasement, there are still before us its true representatives who are ready to suffer punishment in their fearless protest against its iniquities, in their chivalrous championship of its victims. They may be defeated again and again, for the time, yet in them is to be seen the true ideal of their civilisation. The inspiration that holds them steadfast to their best instincts, through all the outrage and degeneracy around them—that inspiration is the truth dwelling in the heart of Western civilisation. It is from that we have to learn, not from the disastrous self-degradation of the modern Western nations.

To you, young students, who are assembled here to-day, prepared to go forth through the portals of this University to conquer the world before you, I offer my cordial congratulations. It is you who will nurture the seed of a great promise unto its fruition.

The sea of humanity around you is tumultuous with high waves of contending passions. It is as if the Gods and Titans are once again churning it to raise humanity from the depth of the departing age to the ground of the next. This time, also, the churning rope is a serpent, the serpent of Greed, which is vomiting forth its poison. But, as yet, we see no sign of all-beneficent, death-conquering Shiva coming to rescue humanity by absorbing this poison.

We in India are on the shore of this terribly turbulent sea of Time. It has not been given to us directly to take our share in piloting the world through its buffetings. But the drag of the maelstrom is upon us from without and within, the advancing waves of chaos are beating right and left. Well-nigh insoluble problems rise to confront our country, one after another. Communal separatism and dissension are taking menacing shape, polluting the very source of our well-being. The solution of these problems may not be easy, but if it be not found, we shall descend lower and lower into the abyss.

There was a time when culture, fellow-feeling and prosperity reigned in our villages. Go to them now and you will see the fang marks of the reptile of dissolution that bestrides them. Pestilential maladies, born of poverty, of physical and mental starvation, are eating away their vitality. It is for us ourselves to think out where the remedy lies—but not by means of ignorant imaginings, or even of fearful outbursts. Defeated you may be, but you must vow that defeat shall not come by your deserting the helm in fright, or because you foolishly deem it glorious to commit suicide by jumping into the raging waves.

We are too readily inclined to be sentimental. We cannot arrive at the determination to pursue our endeavour with steady dispassion. Take up your country's burden manfully, in the light of your

own intelligence freed from the vagueness of unrealities, facing and knowing the folly, the ugliness, the imperfections that beset you for what they really are, not exaggerating them according to your particular bias. Where in fact our fate is every day insulting us, depriving us, hampering us at every turn—there to delude ourselves with home-made claims to superiority, is one of the worst symptoms of our weakness of character.

If you would truly set to work, you must begin by realising that the seeds of our downfall are within us, deeply imbedded in our character, our society, our habits, our unreasoning prejudices. Whenever I see our people seeking to throw the responsibility for our evil lot on some outside circumstance, to lay the blame for our ill-success solely on the enmity of some alien party, to remain content with shouting their plaints into the unresponsive void, my heart cries out, as did old King Dhritarashtra : " Then do I despair of victory. "

The day has come for us to sally forth against our internal enemies, to deliver a massed attack on the age-old follies that are the real roots of our misfortune. We must raise our own powers out of the slough of *tāmasik* inertness into which they have fallen, and then only can we hope to make honourable peace with the power of our opponents ; otherwise any truce that we may patch up will be one in which we are bound hand and foot in the chains of beggary and indebtedness. We can only rouse the

best in others by means of the best in ourselves, and in this best will lie the welfare of both. Leaky are the vessels into which are cast the reluctant doles granted to the prayers of the weak; of quicksand is the foundation on which rest the favours so obtained.

Let honour come to me from Thee
through a call to some desperate task
    in the pride of poignant suffering.
Lull me not into languid dreams,
Shake me out of this cringing in the dust,
out of the fetters that shackle our mind,
        make futile our destiny,
out of the unreason that bends our dignity down
        under the indiscriminate feet of dictators,
Shatter this age-long shame of ours
    and raise our head
        into the boundless sky,
        into the generous light,
        into the air of freedom.

APPENDIX B

FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATION

I

Address by His Excellency Sir John Anderson
Chancellor

THE 24TH JANUARY, 1935

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY,

Seventy-eight years ago the Act which established and incorporated the Calcutta University was passed. In the life of a University three-quarters of a century is a short period but from the small beginnings of 1857 the Calcutta University has gone from strength to strength and has developed into one of the most important Universities in the East, while its achievements in scientific and historical research have won for it a reputation beyond the limits of the East. Its contributions also to the development of secondary education throughout the Province have been far-reaching. Mistakes and shortcomings there have undoubtedly been. These, it may be said, are common to all human institutions and this is primarily an occasion for contemplating the positive achievements of the University. I am

encouraged to believe that in the future the University will steadfastly pursue its ideal, the advancement of learning.

It is an invidious task, when there are so many deserving of mention, to name individuals, but among the benefactors to whom the University is indebted for its steady progress, there spring to the mind immediately the names of such men as Tarak Nath Palit, Rash Behary Ghose and the greatest of the Vice-Chancellors, Asutosh Mookerjee.

The Universities of a country are the natural leaders of its thought; and so we find that the social, political and cultural history of Bengal during the last half century has been profoundly influenced by the Calcutta University and that men and women intimately connected with it have taken a very important part in the initiation and organization of new movements for the improvement of the conditions and the raising of the standards of life. To illustrate this it is only necessary to mention such names as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Mahendra Lal Sircar, Gooroo Dass Banerjee, Sir Jagadis Bose, Sir P. C. Roy, Sir Brajendra Nath Seal and Dr. Meghnad Saha. These are but a few of the illustrious sons of the University who for their high achievements in different walks of life are honoured far beyond the confines of their mother country.

The observance of Foundation Day by a University, College, or School gives an opportunity to successive generations of paying their homage, and

publicly manifesting their gratitude to its founders and to those who in their various ways have contributed to its healthy growth and development. It rightly focuses attention upon the ideals and examples of those from whose efforts spring the privileges enjoyed through membership of the body, be it University, College, or School.

This is the first occasion on which the Foundation Day of the Calcutta University has been commemorated, and, as your Chancellor, I am glad that I was able to accept the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor to join with past and present members of the University in its celebration. It is fitting that on this day we should concentrate our thoughts upon men such as those I have already mentioned, who have shown themselves true benefactors and true sons of the University in various ways. 'Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us.'

A University is judged not only by its success in equipping its students for the crafts and professions, not only by its contributions to scholarship and science, but also by the influence which it exerts, upon the imagination and the character, by the ideals which it fosters, by the extent to which it has helped to enrich and fulfil the lives of its alumni and through them the corporate life of the community. It is towards these ends that members of the University now and in the future may direct their energies.

They have received a godly heritage; let them see to it that it is ever handed on undiminished. Let them strive to do all that is necessary to maintain themselves in fitness of body and vigour of mind. Let them uphold the traditions of service which the great benefactors of the past have handed down, but, not content with merely maintaining these, let them make their own individual contribution to the enlargement of the spheres which a University can serve; let them ensure that by their corporate efforts the University may become a yet more powerful instrument for leading and directing public opinion and the life of the country along sound and healthy channels.

A great task of national regeneration lies before Bengal, and the University can, if it will, play a vital part in it. I would ask each one of you to see that, so far as in you lies, it does so. Seldom before have we stood in greater need of discipline, organization and courage than we do to-day—discipline to order our lives towards desirable goals, undeterred by partisan counsel and unmoved by insidious influences that are working to warp immature minds; organization to pool our resources in every sphere of life and direct them for purposes of national regeneration; courage to face squarely the problems that confront us and take the course that reason and reflection recommend without flinching or fear or caring for the plaudits of the hour.

It was such qualities as these which assured

success to the efforts of those who built this great University up from small beginnings in a space of time which is small compared to that which has attended the growth of the older Universities in England and we owe it to them to prove ourselves worthy of their example. By so doing we can give practical proof of our gratitude for their benefactions, the fruits of which we now enjoy and to commemorate which we are to-day assembled.

Address by Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-Law, M.L C.
Vice-Chancellor

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is my proud privilege to extend to you all a most cordial welcome to this unique gathering where we have assembled for the first time in the history of the University to celebrate its Foundation Day. To the members of the University, its teachers and students, its alumni, friends and well-wishers, let me offer my good wishes, and to those who are here I also tender my sincere thanks for the response they have given and the co-operation they have extended to make to-day's function worthy of the occasion. To Your Excellency I desire to convey my deep gratitude for your inspiring presence amidst us this morning and for the sympathy and encouragement you have shown from the very moment the proposal for to-day's celebration was brought to your notice.

Time will not permit me to review in detail the activities of our University, to dwell on its achievements as also its failures during the last three quarters of a century. Broadly speaking, however, the University has passed through two main stages.

Brought into existence during a period when India was passing through a great political upheaval, the first University established under British rule in this country aimed merely at conducting examinations and affiliating institutions, which in their turn prepared candidates for examinations. The University was started not mainly for promotion of teaching and research nor for the conservation of Indian traditions and culture, but chiefly to test the fitness of Indian youths to enter the learned professions and hold appointments in the various services. The steady pursuit of this policy has left a deep impress on our national growth and has not been entirely satisfactory in its consequences.

The second period which commenced in an active form after the passing of the Indian Universities Act of 1904 marks the growth of a new ideal—the ideal of a great Teaching and Research University. During the last thirty years we have witnessed remarkable progress in various departments of study and thought, and inspite of our limitations and difficulties we are still attempting to follow that policy of advancement of learning which will bring glory to our *Alma Mater* and our motherland.

We cannot also shut our eyes to some of the lasting benefits which have accrued to us through the agency of the University. This University has stood for the spread of education, has thrown open its gates to one and all irrespective of caste, creed and community. It has brought the East and the

West together, opened new visions and awakened in us new ambitions. It has roused the political consciousness of the people and has contributed to the growth of national solidarity. It has called into its service distinguished representatives of all communities who have steadfastly worked together for its general welfare.

While we can legitimately take pride in our past achievements, we must not be lulled into inactivity or allow ourselves to remain satisfied with what has been done. Inspired by the progress we have attained, we must be as anxious to conserve the best traditions of our University as we are eager and fearless to remove its inherent weaknesses. Ours has been the first University in India to sound the clarion call of progress at the beginning of this century. Since then other provinces in this vast country have been making rapid advance in various fields of activity. We have to march ahead, in full remembrance of the fact that Bengal's great men have in the past stimulated work and thought in all parts of India, and in social, educational, religious and political spheres Bengal has led the way; but if we are to hold in future a position of pre-eminence, we must never be forgetful of the imperative necessity of re-shaping our policy, of increasing our efficiency in all directions and maintaining a standard of work which will be second to none in any part of this country.

When we first thought of celebrating the

Foundation Day, I was anxious that we should concern ourselves mainly with the activities of our students and bring them into closer touch with the University. It is a matter of disappointment to me that we have not been able to associate with to-day's function the students of the University outside the metropolis. To you who are assembled here to-day I express my personal gratitude for the splendid way in which you have responded to the call of your *Alma Mater*. You have proved to-day that if you are given proper training and facilities, you can give as fine a display of organising ability and disciplined action as any band of University students can be expected to achieve. True as you are and as you must be to your own college, you have carried to-day through the streets of the city the new banner of your University, thus proclaiming your loyal adherence to the University to which we all belong and of which your colleges are vital and component parts.

One of the great needs of the hour is to build up a healthy corporate life in this University, to provide for our students the amplest facilities for the full exercise of their powers, so that the great qualities which lie dormant in them may shine forth in perfection; to help in the establishment of students' organisations with a view to equip them to face the battle of life; to develop them into men, strong and self-reliant, hard-working ahd fearless, proud of their national culture, but not narrow in

their outlook, anxious to promote peace and happiness, filled with a lofty idealism, but not swayed by class hatred or unthinking emotion—men who will be the worthy leaders of a new Bengal, who will carry the torch of learning and freedom to the lasting glory of their beloved motherland.

From every corner of this great province there rises to-day the anxious question, shall we live or shall we die, shall we rise or shall we fall, shall we unite or shall we divide, shall we strive to reconstruct or shall we follow the barren path of destruction. Let me gather in my own the voices of you all who are assembled here to-day and of those whom you represent and send back the response, we shall live, we shall rise, we shall unite and shall accept truth and service as the motto of our lives.

II

Address by His Excellency Sir John Anderson
Chancellor

THE 24TH JANUARY, 1936

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, MEMBERS AND STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Last year we commemorated for the first time the Foundation Day of the University of Calcutta. It was a happy inspiration and I am glad to see on this second occasion a strong and representative gathering. It is particularly gratifying to be able to welcome this year the representatives of mofussil colleges whose participation to-day is a mark of their common loyalty to their University.

We have met at a time when we are bound together by a common sense of loss. Were this a mere occasion of ephemeral rejoicing, possessed of no deeper significance, neither you nor I would have the heart to enter into it. But this day stands for more than mere display; it commemorates the beginning of a great endeavour which we are called by duty to maintain, and in remembering the high

services of those who have gone before us let us pause to pay homage to the memory of one whose life was the very pattern of devoted service to his people—our late Sovereign His Majesty King George the Fifth.

It is given to some men to comprehend and express in their lives the essential goodness of things—to value them not by the names with which they are labelled but by the measure of their good for mankind. If such be an attribute of greatness let us acknowledge it in him. Born of a long line of Kings to the highest order of an ancient aristocracy, he upheld and adorned the dignity of his high calling and strove to gather about him all that was best and noblest in his Empire; destined by history to guide his country through the bitter years when nation clashed against nation, he stood forth as a shining example of true patriotism yet failed not to win the respect and affection of friend and enemy alike; called to reign over a world-wide empire in an age of ferment, of new-found liberties and awakened consciousness of race and class, he proved himself at once the sure guide of rising democracy and the trusted guardian of the rights of his subjects.

Father of his People

He has enriched the world by a truer conception of Kingship, a nobler ideal of aristocracy and

an inspiring vision of the potentialities of a democracy that is both free and in the truest sense aristocratic. Thus in these latter years did he attain to that goal which he prized most—to be and to be recognised as the father of his peoples. Let us honour his memory not as a thing that has passed but as a living example that may long continue to inspire us all.

We pay our humble tribute of sympathy to the bereaved and vow our common loyalty to his successor His Majesty King Edward the Eighth—a King trained from an early age to discipline and service and distinguished beyond his fellows by knowledge of his wide dominions and understanding of his diverse peoples. Nearly a year ago, as Prince of Wales, he made a national appeal in England for a thank-offering fund to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of His late Majesty King George the Fifth. The cause he chose was the cause of Youth, and I repeat one sentence of his speech as a fitting reminder of our duties to-day. He said on that occasion: 'I can think of no cause that makes so national an appeal as the cause of the younger generation.'

Well, in our varied callings it falls to us all to serve the King in different ways—but those who are giving of their best for the younger generation may rest assured that they are rendering to their King-Emperor a truly acceptable service.

OLD AND NEW PROBLEMS

With these thoughts I turn to speak of the University whose eightieth birthday we are assembled to commemorate. Eighty years sounds a long time in the history of modern Bengal but it is a brief period in the life of a university. Memories are apt to be short, and events have moved with unprecedented rapidity. New knowledge, new discoveries, and new problems have crowded in upon you, and teacher, student and administrator alike would be more than human if at times they did not feel a sense of bewilderment.

Yet your problems are not those of the modern world only : some of them are age-old, and will persist for all time, so long as men continue to ask themselves the age-old question—what is the aim and nature of educaton. Some of your problems, arising as they do from the development of the machine and the growth of rapid communications all over the world, are essentially modern and without precedent to guide to their solution. Others again are problems such as the universities of the Western world had to face long ago during their long transition from the status of pious foundations with a restricted purpose to the position which they now hold in the national life of the modern state.

Unlike so many of the universities in the Western world, the University of Calcutta started

from its outset as an institution called into being by the deliberate act of the State; but a national University is not the product of a single generatior and cannot be created by executive action alone. It is a growth that springs from an intellectual and moral conviction of its necessity—a conviction strong enough of its own merit to permeate the minds and mould the actions of a people.

If at times, in the day-to-day administration of its affairs you are met by problems of disunity or by obstacles that seem to be placed in your way by vested interests or sectional ambition, do not think that yours is a new experience or that other universities have overcome such difficulties by any quick and easy remedy. A university stands for a longer view and a broader outlook upon life than that which would diagnose every evil as a new one and apply the latest remedy, only to discard it in disgust if it does not immediately succeed.

It is the function of a university to provoke thought and call forth ideas: but it does not accept them merely because they are new or merely because they attract for the moment the greatest degree of popular attention: nor does it forget them merely because they are old. A university stands throughout the years to bear witness that the search after truth is continuous, and that high endeavour and patience must go hand in hand. It is in this spirit, I trust, that the University of Calcutta will face its

future and will inspire its scholars to face the problems of their own lives.

Many of you, perhaps the great majority present to-day, must by force of circumstances look to your training here as a means of fitting yourselves to earn a livelihood: but the University can offer you something more than that. The time will come, all too soon for most of you, when the business of your daily lives will claim the whole of your thoughts and energies. Your work—perhaps your lack of work—your successes or your disappointments will close in upon you and cut off the rest of the world from your vision, unless during these precious years of University life you have learnt the way of escape—to see beyond your surroundings, to penetrate beyond appearances and to value an idea not by the name with which it is labelled but by the measure of its good for the service of your fellow men, your country and mankind.

I have quoted before from the appeal made by His Majesty as Prince of Wales on behalf of Youth. Among the gifts he sought to obtain for them was one which the University is seeking to obtain for you—the gift of healthy and corporate recreation.

More than twenty-three hundred years ago a great Greek philosopher expressed in these words his conception of the surroundings in which young men should be educated: 'Then will our youth dwell in a land of health amid fair sights and sounds and

receive the good in everything: and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and the ear like a health-giving breeze from a purer region and insensibly draw the soul from the earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.'

To us, whose University is set in the midst of a teeming city, these words may sound like a far-off dream, conceived by men who lived a spacious life in a land of clean white stone, unclouded skies and an azure sea; but their essential message—a message of health and an ordered rhythm of life—is as true for us as it was for them. Here in Calcutta investigations have shown us how much is to be done by teaching and prevention no less than by cure, to raise the standards of health and physique among the student body. I trust that those who are engaged in this work will receive from all who can help them a full measure of sympathy and support.

One word more before I close this Birthday Address. For the individual there comes a time when birthdays bring with them a tinge of sadness; but let there be no such sadness in this the Birthday of the University. It has grown because it has answered a need among the people of this province: its very growth has called new aspirations and new problems into being. So long as it sets itself to face those problems and to call forth to the solution all that is best in the coming generation, it will not

age with the passing of the years. Its youth will be renewed from generation to generation and its strength will stand deeply rooted in the hearts and lives of the men and women of Bengal.

Address by Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-Law, M.L.C.

Vice-Chancellor

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Twelve months have rapidly come and gone since we met here for the first time in the history of the University in commemoration of its Foundation Day. This year we meet under the shadow of universal sorrow. We pay our solemn tribute of respect to the memory of His Majesty King George V, a tribute which is occasioned not merely by the fact that he was our King-Emperor, entitled to spontaneous loyalty and devotion, but also by reason of the noble virtues and qualities of which he was an embodiment and which endeared him to millions of his subjects belonging to a variety of races and religions.

His Majesty reigned during a most eventful period in the history of the world which witnessed catastrophic changes in the constitutions of kingdoms and empires and recorded the downfall of Imperial dynasties ruling for centuries. But such is the glory of the British constitution and such were

the personal qualities of His late Majesty that not only did he nobly maintain his paramount position but deeply strengthened it in the affections of his subjects throughout the Empire. Simple in habits, generous in disposition, devoted to the happiness and welfare of his peoples, ever willing to make sacrifices for their sake in peace or in war, determined to uphold constitutional government and to base his royal authority upon justice, equity and popular will, His Majesty was the indissoluble link in the mighty bond that holds together the diverse elements constituting the great Commonwealth of British Nations. We respectfully convey to His Majesty King Edward VIII our loyal devotion to the Throne and offer to him and the Queen Mother our deepest sympathy at their overpowering grief which we share with the rest of the Empire.

Let me now extend to you all, friends and well-wishers of the University, its teachers and students, our cordial welcome and express to you our gratitude for having responded to our invitation to-day. To Your Excellency we feel deeply thankful for your inspiring presence amidst us, which demonstrates your unabated interest in the welfare of the University. Last year I regretted that our function had to be confined to Calcutta colleges only. There are, however, amidst us to-day representatives of many colleges situated outside the metropolis who during their short visit to the city of their University will be its guests. I specially welcome them. Their

number is necessarily limited but their participation is essential for the complete success of the function.

This assembly is in one sense of greater significance than the Annual Convocation. Its scope is much wider, for here we stand face to face with thousands of University students and have not to restrict ourselves to graduates alone. Palatial buildings, halls and museums do not by themselves represent the University. The life and spirit of the University are determined by its alumni whom you so worthily represent. The enthusiasm and keenness which this celebration inspired last year are still vivid in the minds of us all. The men and women who stood where you stand to-day set an example of devotion and discipline which, in the larger interests of the University and the nation, must not be allowed to disappear with the closing of this annual ceremony. It is imperative that organisation and discipline should characterise your activities throughout the year, so that you may permanently stamp the seal of vigour and vitality upon the corporate life of the University and the colleges.

The record of work done during the year for the development of physical education and the deepening of an *esprit de corps* is indeed encouraging. The efficiency and morale of the University Training Corps have considerably improved and fill us with hopes for its future. The Rowing Club which will soon have its own home is making steady progress

and has justified its existence. I do not ignore that there is yet ample scope for improvement, expansion and co-ordination. The provision for the better training of our students, specially of the best amongst them, calls for our immediate attention. I take this opportunity of offering to Your Excellency's Government our grateful thanks for providing us this year with a playground in the Maidan. This removes a long-felt want and will have a wholesome effect on our future activities.

The University stands not merely as a cloistered assembly of learning or as a busy centre of examinations; it also aims at developing the health and character of its alumni and at moulding personalities capable of the largest good to the province and the nation. This latter purpose of the University I desire to emphasise before you to-day. If I speak to you about certain habits of mind and action which I earnestly wish you to imbibe, I do so because of my deep-rooted conviction that the future of this province rests with you, the rising generation of its men and women. Regard it not as a common platitude of no serious significance. The period through which we are passing is momentous. You are charged to-day as being the products of a system of education which makes you good for nothing, which saps your vitality and renders you unfit for sustained and useful work.

Let me ask you, are you going to accept this challenge without protest? Are you willing to let

things drift as they are doing to-day and perpetuate an era of humiliation and hardship? It is for you to be inspired by a practical idealism, to shake off the sense of inferiority from which you suffer and to stand up as men, upright and fearless, determined to achieve what is right and what is just. Let us cultivate the habit of hard and honest work, the habit of enjoying life, and learn to value the dignity of labour. A spirit of invincibility must animate your actions. You must belong to the army of the unconquerable whom difficulties do not daunt nor failures discourage, to whom all things are possible—and the impossible, the most alluring and attractive of all. I long for the day when a spirit of adventure will animate the youths of my province. I know the spirit has been awakened but if it is to live it must be carefully fostered. Why should not Bengal be the first in India to send out a batch of explorers to conquer Mount Everest or some other region still unknown and untrodden? Why should not our young men scatter themselves far and wide, actively participating in social service and engaging themselves in pursuits and occupations which lie outside the beaten track?

Let us cultivate the habit of open-mindedness, the habit of unprejudiced facing of all facts that come within our vision. Respect for superiors and appreciation of other people's point of view are among the essential factors for the sound growth of society. Forget not that gentleness of behaviour

and politeness are compatible with true strength and independence of character. Never sacrifice truth nor surrender your convictions to the care of other men or institutions. In whatever sphere we may work, however great our trials and tribulations, let us respect the Inner Spirit of Man and ever maintain its freedom as our priceless treasure.

One of the essential qualities which you must develop is a well-balanced sense of discipline. The rule of discipline connotes sacrifice of personal comfort, rights and privileges. This sacrifice, I am aware, may be taken advantage of by short-sighted interested persons, thus retarding the growth of full and independent manhood. Bearing this danger in mind—a danger which may assume a colossal character as it may well crush some of the most vital elements in the life of a race—let us recognise that habits of discipline, obedience to rule and corporate action are imperative for the stability of a nation. You must learn to make sacrifices cheerfully and must welcome them, when they are made for the advancement of the truest interests of the country. There must be nothing mean, nothing narrow, nothing unclean about the ideal which will call forth your best efforts. It must be an all-embracing one, noble, inspiring and permanent—the ideal of Service and of Freedom.

I have spoken on the need for widening your activities and for raising the standard of your work and achievements. I have dwelt on the necessity

for training a race of young men and women amongst whom will be found not merely leaders of thought and action in diverse branches of our public life but also an unlimited supply of workers and warriors—all capable, earnest and God-fearing—who will manfully combat ignorance and superstition and strive for the supremacy of Truth, Right and Reason. There is, however, one condition which must be fulfilled if we are ever to attain our goal. *Unity is strength* is an old and well-tried maxim which is of paramount significance at the present hour. While you will strive for individual success, you must never forget that no great and permanent achievement in any field of national activity is ever possible unless we learn to sink our differences and stand united in thought and in action.

You have to-day carried through the streets of this city the flags of your colleges, each a symbol of your loyalty to the institution to which you belong. That loyalty is unquestioned and must be developed in all its aspects. But forget not that at the head of your procession has been carried the flag of your University and its banner stands unfurled in front of you at this ceremony. Preserving your loyalty to your colleges, you have learnt how to offer your homage to your *Alma Mater*. Let me, however, remind you that even your University, great as it is, bows its head in eternal reverence and devotion to the mighty spirit of our Motherland to which you also owe the deepest and the most abiding allegiance.

Do we not discover this inspiring undercurrent of unity while we serve our respective institutions? May we not keep this invigorating ideal before us in all walks of life and shape our policy and action accordingly? May we not remember that our ideal is harmony and not discord, freedom and not slavery, not warring factions, castes and communities, each distrustful of the other, but a united Bengal—nay a united India—marching resolutely towards the goal of self-realisation? May we not regard ourselves as her sons and daughters—Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists and Christians—all loyal to our flags, but all equally determined to find for our great country an honourable place in the Commonwealth of Nations, to restore it to its position of glory and freedom—a country which will not merely be reckoned as a political and industrial power, but also as one which in the light of its culture and civilization will contribute to the moral and intellectual stability of the world at large? My fervent prayer is that there may rise among you, and among those you represent, men and women inspired by this lofty idealism, who will consider no toil too exacting, no preparation too arduous, no service too high or too humble for securing the well-being of our beloved Motherland.

III

Address by Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-Law, M.L.C.

Vice-Chancellor

THE 30TH JANUARY, 1937

MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Once again we meet here for the third time in succession in celebration of the Foundation Day of the University. It is my privilege to extend to you all, friends and well-wishers of the University, its teachers and alumni, the greetings of the University and its indebtedness for the support and co-operation it has received from you all. In the sphere of academic work, in our efforts to serve the cause of intellectual advancement, we have striven to introduce gradual changes in our system, some of which are capable of far-reaching consequences. Our greatest handicap is want of funds, but there can be no question that we must resolutely combine our resources to extend the facilities of education from one corner of the province to the other and also to endeavour to raise its quality in every possible manner.

While the University must always help in spreading the bounds of knowledge and also in other ways strengthen the intellectual life of the country, one of its primary duties must be to devote itself directly and indirectly to the progressive welfare of the student community in general, acting in close co-operation with schools and colleges under its jurisdiction. The University has steadily continued its policy of helping and co-ordinating the corporate activities of the colleges. Of the new projects already approved is the scheme for the promotion of military studies among its students, which, though limited in extent, will lay the foundation for training in a sphere of activity capable of vast possibilities in building up national life and character. May I not express the hope that at no distant time our scheme will develop and Bengal will have a fully equipped institution for imparting military training to our youths who will obtain more extensive opportunities for efficient training in this direction?

Among the schemes of expansion for the improvement of the conditions of our youths which are now engaging the attention of the University I must mention the development of the Students' Welfare Department which with its limited resources is now doing splendid work. We want to see established within the University a well-equipped organisation devoted entirely to the welfare of our students, which will act in co-operation with schools and colleges and with local branches created throughout the province.

It must, among other things, organise after-care centres, arrange for free medical examination and treatment, supply teachers for physical training and maintain a central institute for general promotion of health, character and efficiency. It must foster the establishment of students' organisations within each college, pledged to their own corporate welfare and controlled and managed by themselves, for which they must be genuinely encouraged to undertake responsibility. Let me emphasise that no student movement has succeeded in any country, nor will it succeed here, unless it guarantees to the students themselves all reasonable facilities for free and unrestricted development on lines best suited to their needs and to the needs of the nation. Again, we want to see established in this city special hostels, as cheaply managed as possible, open to all classes, which can accommodate an appreciable number of those homeless youths who, pursued by a burning zeal for education, move about helplessly from place to place or succeed in securing shelter sometimes under humiliating conditions. These and other projects of expansion cannot be carried into effect without substantial endowments and donations; and to the State and public-spirited citizens I earnestly appeal to come forward and help us with generous assistance.

Closely related to the welfare of the students is the recent scheme for providing practical training in the technicalities of trades and for helping our

youths in other directions. Let me say at once that the University has never claimed that the problem of unemployment, with which are closely connected many social, political and economic factors, can be solved single-handed by the University. What we are trying to achieve is to direct the attention of our educated youths to the supreme fact that if Bengal is to live and grow as a self-respecting province, her children must discover how they can be best prepared for and employed in various vocations in life, many of which are now closed to them, and not concentrate on jobs and services. This change of mentality and outlook will never be realised by mere advice, however wholesome. From all directions we must start taking action, no matter how modest the beginning may be. Of the various conditions which the State and society must fulfil, the University is attempting to achieve one and that is by seeking to establish a definite contact between itself and the world of business, trade and commerce, which may serve as a basis for future co-operation and understanding.

I have been recently asked questions regarding the form of our celebration. We are not pledged to any particular programme. We ourselves have been making changes, and any reasonable proposals for future expansion of our activities will receive due consideration by the University. But let me emphasise here once again that it was never the intention of the University that the students' display that we witness here this morning should be confined

to a show or demonstration organised only for the purpose of the celebration. What the University has always aimed at is that each college under its jurisdiction should steadfastly carry on a programme of corporate activities for the benefit of its students and strive to equip them for active service in different spheres of useful and constructive work. Such activities must obviously include an intensive programme of games, drills and other physical activities conducted throughout the year to which will be attracted all students of the college. At this annual celebration friends and well-wishers of the University assemble here and witness the performance of the chosen representatives of each institution who will spontaneously come and gather under the protecting banner of their *Alma Mater*. If, with the co-operation of the principals and professors and the students themselves, a scheme of work, aiming at simultaneous growth of intellect and building of health and character, steadily continues and develops, if this can gradually sow the seeds of unity, organisation and discipline even among fifty per cent. of thirty thousand youths who read in the colleges to-day, we shall be helping to create a new Bengal, a Bengal that is destined to lead and not be led, a Bengal that will produce at a moment's notice thousands of able-bodied intellectual youths, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, trained and brought up according to the highest ideals of service, capable of responding to the call of the nation and ready

to unfurl the flag of truth and sincerity, of progress, unity and freedom. That was one of the principal ideals which lay behind this part of the programme of our celebration to which you, my young friends, have so nobly responded to-day.

If the University is to be true to its salt, if it is to fulfil its mission in awakening a true national spirit and the consciousness of the people, it must contribute in every possible way to the building up of the youth of the country and train them in all spheres of useful and constructive activity. Our resources are limited, our difficulties are formidable and the task of reconstruction that faces educational institutions is gigantic. Though the ideal will never be reached except by united effort and tireless work, we shall never desert our post. If Bengal is again to play her part in the remaking of India, she must produce through her educational institutions a race of men and women, strong in body and mind, true, resolute and self-reliant, burning with lofty patriotism and idealism, not carried away by emotions but capable of exercising critical and reasonable judgment, trained both to be leaders and soldiers, amenable to discipline—discipline imposed by the combined will of themselves—devoted to duty, determined to work not as a class or community but in a spirit of corporate service, and ever willing to place their services in all capacities, humble and great, for the good of society and for the advancement of the highest interest of the nation. Let us not for

a moment consider the attainment of this ideal to be an impossibility. Has not Bengal produced generations of men who nobly played their parts in the regeneration of their Motherland? Let the sacred memories of such men ever permeate the atmosphere of the University and its educational institutions, and let them serve to remind the University, its teachers and students, that we who work in this sphere of national activity are charged with a tremendous responsibility which we can never shake off.

I pray from the bottom of my heart that the University may now and for ever be the national home of progressive culture and enlightenment, the torch-bearer of knowledge and freedom and bring to its doors all classes and communities, who may be willing to join us in serving the cause of education and sow far and wide permanent seeds of national development. If the University's band has opened to-day's proceedings by playing to tune the opening lines of a celebrated national song or if you are ready to sing in chorus a song specially composed by Rabindranath, all this serves a deep and significant purpose. That purpose is nothing more or nothing less than to invoke, in the performance of our daily duties of reconstruction, the sacred name of our Motherland, to sound the clarion call of unity to one and all, Hindus, Moslems and Christians, and make a fervent appeal to them to place the interest of the country, whether it is theirs by birth or adoption,

above every other interest or consideration, to bow their heads in the deepest loyalty and reverence to her Unconquerab'e Spirit and pledge themselves to her eternal welfare and prosperity.